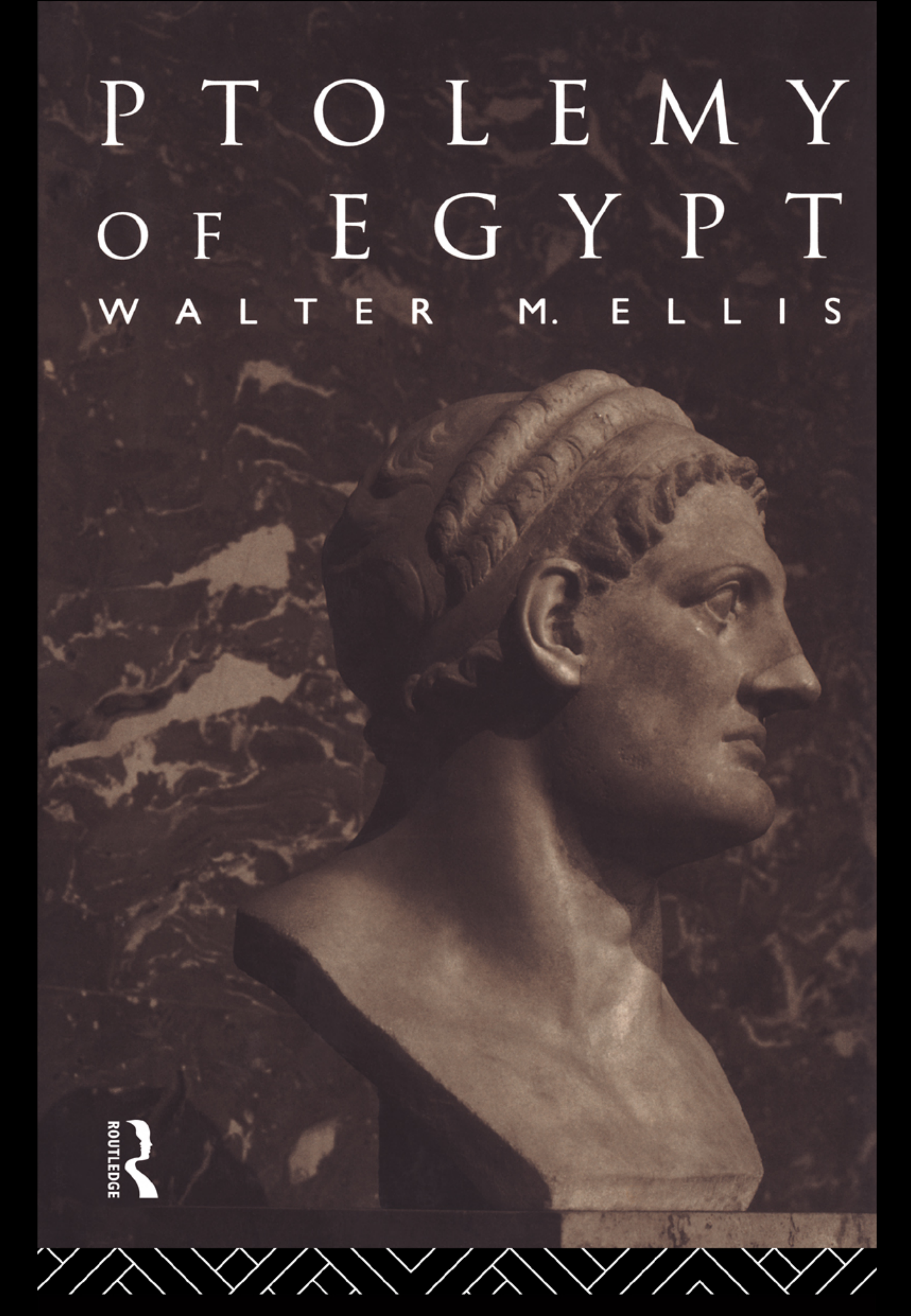



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# PTOLEMY OF EGYPT

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Walter M.Ellis




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A member of Alexander's bodyguard and a first-rate soldier, Ptolemy was even more talented at, and better known for, the civilian rather than military skills. His manner was modest and unassuming, and he was superlatively generous and approachable, having assumed none of the pride of royalty.

Quintus Curtius Rufus, *The History of Alexander* (trans. John Yardley in Penguin Classics edition)

> Upon the king! let our lives, our souls,
> Our debts, our careful wives,
> Our children and our sins lay on the king!
> We must bear all. O hard condition,
> Twin-born with greatness, subject to the breath
> Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel
> But his own wringing! What infinite heart's-ease
> Must kings neglect, that private men enjoy!

Shakespeare, *Henry V*

For my beloved aunt
Mildred Bainbridge

# CONTENTS

# ILLUSTRATIONS

## MAPS



## PLATES

# PREFACE

Although we know a great many facts about Ptolemy I, his personality is beyond recovery. I see him, on the basis of an inference from Curtius (9.8.23, quoted above) and my conclusions from all these facts, as a practical, methodical, patient, and hard-working, public servant. I see him in the mold of a Vespasian or a Harry Truman. He was a man of insight, but he was not a man of charisma.

He did not excite the mass of men the way that Alexander the Great did or even Demetrius Poliorcetes. But he was shrewd. He understood what neither of those men did, nor any of the other leaders of that generation. He understood, at some level, consciously or unconsciously, that Alexander's empire would not survive as an entity.

Ptolemy chose Egypt as his satrapy, perhaps long before Alexander died. He concentrated all his considerable skill and intelligence on the preservation, the development, and the promotion of Egypt: of a new Hellenized Egypt, centered in the Alexandria which still bears his leader's name but which, likewise, still bears Ptolemy's stamp.

Alexandria! Is there any other city in the world that conjures up such a rich, exotic, mental image? Antony and Cleopatra, Arius and Athanasius, Amr ibn al-As, Saladin, Cavafy, the Thais of Anatole France and of Jules Massenet, the Justine of Lawrence Durrell.

I wish my book were more about Alexandria, Ptolemy's greatest achievement, and less about the interminable wars of the Successors. But I am limited by the surviving sources and by the preferences of the ancient historians, who seemed to think that the art of war was more important than the arts of civilization.

We could wish that Plutarch had left us a life of Ptolemy. But if the sources seem insufficient in the early years for his life, at least we have the connected chronicle of Diodorus. After that, from about 301 until his death in 283, there is almost nothing. We would like to know more about his relationship with his wives and children.

We would like to know more about the growth of Alexandria, the operation of the Museum and its library, the social and economic life of this brave new world. But unless the sands of Egypt yield new evidence, we must be content with what we have. I have reserved for the epilog a brief discussion of Ptolemy's administration of his empire, since it is built on the sands of conjecture. The hard

ground of evidence does not exist. There is much evidence for administrative practices in the reign of his successor, but hardly anything for that of the first Ptolemy.

I have tried to limit my discussion of the Successors to a minimum. The sheer number of these competing generals is daunting to the uninitiated. Also, trying to distinguish between such names as Antipater, Antigonus, Antiochus, Alcetas, and Attalus, Polyperchon, Peucestas, and Perdiccas, not to mention the endless number of gentlemen named Demetrius, can be a challenge even for the expert.

For the same reason, I have employed a conservative approach to spelling in the belief that the reader has enough problems, without having to decipher Kassandros as Cassander, or to struggle with the notion that Korinthos is the city of Corinth or Kupros is the island of Cyprus. Likewise, I have held on tightly to surnames and nicknames like "the One-Eyed," in the hope that it will aid the reader through some notoriously difficult territory. In case this proves to be not enough, I have also added a glossary of personal names at the end of the book.

I fear that I have not been wholly consistent in my use of the term "Macedonian." For the record, let me state that I believe Macedonians, ancient and modern, are Greeks. But it is also a fact that ancient Macedonians distinguished themselves from Greeks, as the Greeks distinguished themselves from Macedonians. A Texan is an American, but many Americans see Texans in a class by themselves. The Welsh and the Cornish stand in an ambiguous relationship with the English, as do Ukrainians with Russians, Austrians with Germans, Alsatians with the French. The list is endless. Americans of English ancestry speak the same language as the English, only differently. They admire English culture, but grudgingly. They want to be English in some situations, but not in others.

The "backward" Macedonians were suddenly thrust into a position of leadership over the Greeks, who, from the Macedonian point of view, had not done a very good job of governing themselves. The Macedonians embraced Greek culture and their own role as leaders, but, at the same time, they must have felt slightly superior to the mighty Greeks, who had fallen so far so fast. These contradictions may not be rational, but nor are they unusual.

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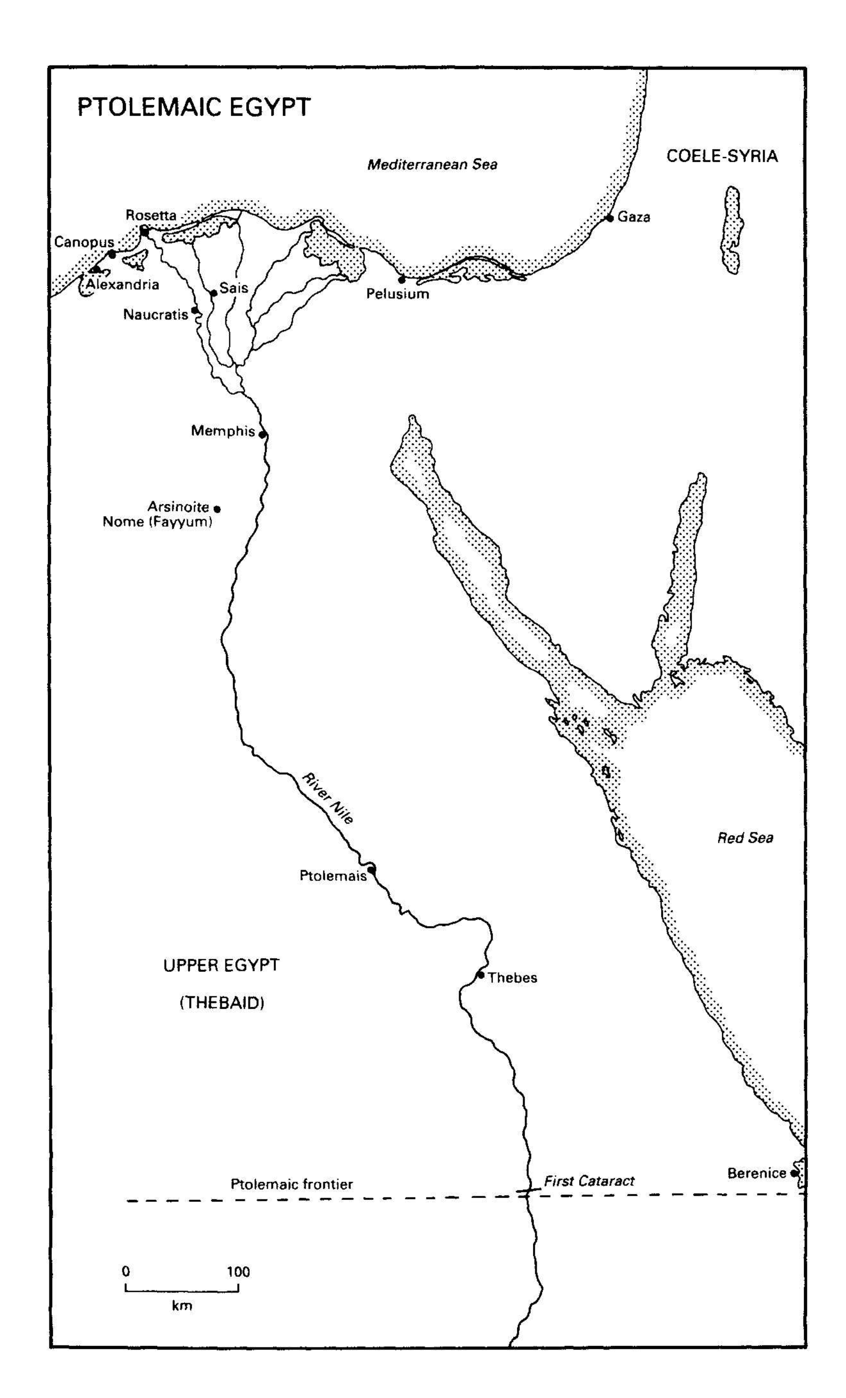
# ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT TITLES

| | |
|---|---|
| *AJA* | *American Journal of Archaeology* |
| *AJPh* | *American Journal of Philology* |
| *CAH* | *The Cambridge Ancient History* |
| *CP* | *Classical Philology* |
| *CQ* | *Classical Quarterly* |
| *CW* | *Classical World* |
| *FGrH* | F.Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin, Leiden 1923–58) |
| *HSCP* | *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* |
| *JHS* | *Journal of Hellenic Studies* |
| *OGIS* | *Orientis Graeci Inscriptions Selectae,* ed. W.Dittenberger, 2 vols (Leipzig 1903–5) |
| *PACA* | *Proceedings of the African Classical Association* |
| *PEleph.* | *Elephantine Papyri,* ed. O.Rubensohn (Berlin 1907) |
| *SEG* | *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* |
| *SIG*$^3$ | *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum,* ed. W.Dittenberger, 4 vols (3rd edn 1915–24) |
| Step. Byz. | Stephen of Byzantium, sixth-century Byzantine Grammarian |
| Suda | Greek lexicon (*c.* tenth century) formerly known as Suidas |
| *TAPA* | *Transactions of the American Philological Association* |
| Tzetzes | Johannes Tzetzes, Byzantine writer of the twelfth century |

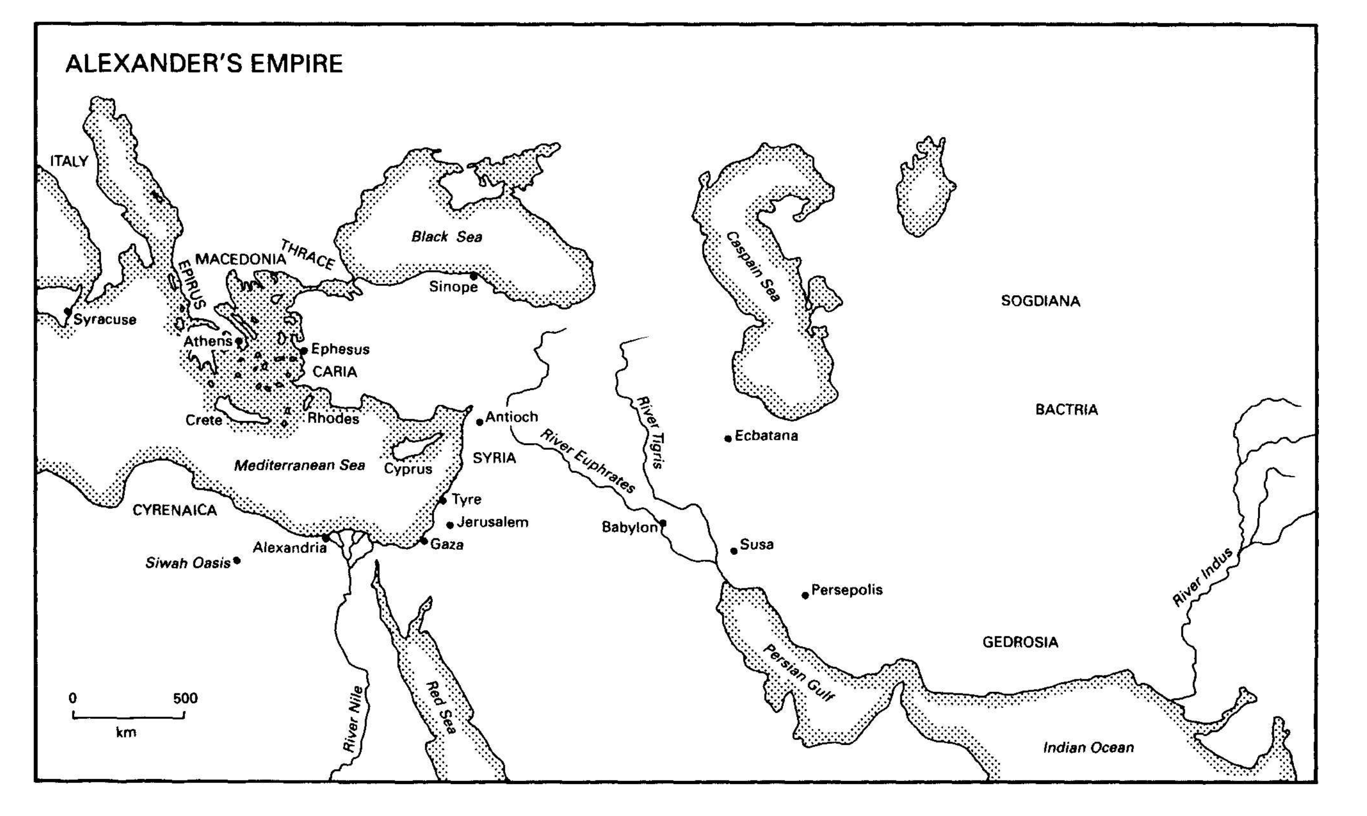
# ANCIENT SOURCES

| | |
|---|---|
| Ael. | Aelianus |
| *VH* | *Varia Historia* |
| Amm. Marc. | Ammianus Marcellinus |
| App. | Appian |
| *Syr.* | *Syrian Wars* |
| Apul. | Apuleius |
| *Met.* | *Metamorphoses* also known as *The Golden Ass* |
| *Ar.* | Aristotle |
| *Ath. Pol.* | *Athenaion Politeia (The Constitution of Athens)* |
| [Ar.] | Pseudo-Aristotle |
| *Oec.* | *Oeconomica* or *Economics* |
| *Arr.* | Arrian, without further citation, this always refers to the *Anabasis* or *The Campaigns of Alexander* |
| *Indica* | *Book of India* |
| *Met' Alex.* | refers to the fragments of the *Events after Alexander* also known as the *Successors* |
| Athen. | Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophistai (The Learned Banquet)* |
| Cic. | Cicero |
| *De Div.* | *De Divinatione (On Divination)* |
| Curt. | Quintus Curtius Rufus *The History of Alexander* |
| Callim. | Callimachus |
| *Iambi* | Poems in the iambic meter |
| Dio Cass. | Dio Cassius |
| Diod. | Diodorus of Sicily *The Library of History* |

| | |
|---|---|
| | *The Library of History* |
| Diog. Laer. | Diogenes Laertius<br>*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* |
| Galen | Galen of Pergamum |
| Hdt. | Herodotus, *The Histories* |
| Hom. | Homer |
| *Od.* | *Odyssey* |
| Joseph. | Josephus |
| *Antiq. Jud.* | *Antiquitates Judaicae*<br>*(Jewish Antiquities)* |
| *Bell.Jud.* | *Bellum Judaicum*<br>*(Jewish War)* |
| Just. | Justinus, *Epitome* (of Trogus) |
| Letter of Aristeas | also known as "Aristeas to Philocrates" (ed. M. Hadas 1951) |
| Luc. | Lucian |
| *Historia* | "How to Write History" |
| *(Macrob.)* | *Macrobii*<br>*(The Long-Lived)* |
| Paus. | Pausanias<br>*Guide to Greece* |
| Plin. | Pliny the Elder<br>*Natural History* |
| Plut. | Plutarch |
| *Alex.* | *Life of Alexander* |
| *De Ira. Cohib.* | *De Cohibenda Ira*<br>"On the Control of Anger" |
| *Is. et Os.* | "On Isis and Osiris" |
| *Demetr.* | *Life of Demetrius* |
| *Pyrr.* | *Life of Pyrrhus* |
| Polyaen. | Polyaenus<br>*Stratagems* |
| *Romance* | The Romance of Alexander exists in several versions, including the Greek and the Armenian. Also known as *Life of Alexander* by Pseudo-Callisthenes |
| Strabo | *The Geography of Strabo* |
| Suet. | Suetonius |
| *Aug.* | *Life of Augustus* |
| Tac. | Tacitus |
| *Hist.* | *The Histories* |

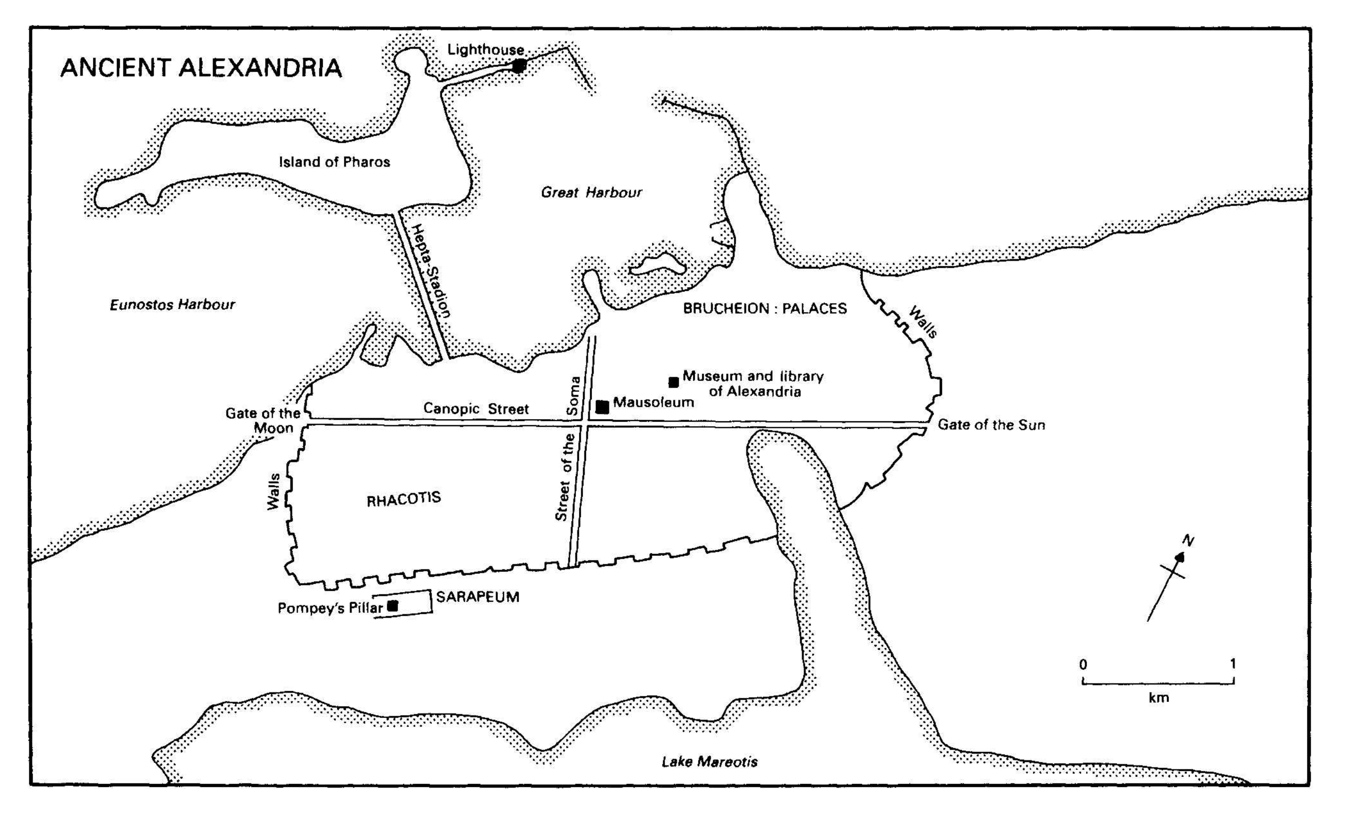

PTOLEMAIC EGYPT
Mediterranean Sea
COELE-SYRIA
Rosetta
Canopus
Alexandria
Sais
Naucratis
Pelusium
Gaza
Memphis
Arsinoite
Nome (Fayyum)
River Nile
Ptolemais
Red Sea
UPPER EGYPT
(THEBAID)
Thebes
Ptolemaic frontier
First Cataract
Berenice
0
100
km

Map 1



ALEXANDER'S EMPIRE
ITALY
Syracuse
EPIRUS
MACEDONIA
THRACE
Athens
Ephesus
CARIA
Crete
Rhodes
Black Sea
Sinope
Mediterranean Sea
Cyprus
Antioch
SYRIA
Tyre
Jerusalem
Gaza
CYRENAICA
Siwah Oasis
Alexandria
River Nile
Red Sea
River Euphrates
Babylon
River Tigris
Caspain Sea
Ecbatana
Susa
Persepolis
Persian Gulf
SOGDIANA
BACTRIA
GEDROSIA
Indian Ocean
River Indus
0
500
km


Map 2


ANCIENT ALEXANDRIA
Lighthouse
Island of Pharos
Great Harbour
Hepta-Stadion
Eunostos Harbour
BRUCHEION : PALACES
Walls
Museum and library of Alexandria
Mausoleum
Soma
Canopic Street
Gate of the Moon
Gate of the Sun
Street of the
Walls
RHACOTIS
SARAPEUM
Pompey's Pillar
N
0
1
km
Lake Mareotis

Map 3

# 1
# IN THE SHADOW OF ALEXANDER

When Alexander the Great died in 323,[1] Ptolemy, one of his field marshals, was about 44 years old.[2] His impact upon the world at this time could hardly be described as profound. He had lived most of his life in the shadow of his great contemporary. Ptolemy could not have been expected to do otherwise. While Alexander was alive, Ptolemy and all his fellow generals could only play their supporting roles in the revolution that was changing the face, not only of Greece and the eastern Mediterranean, but of western Asia as well. With Alexander's death the rules of the game changed drastically, but no one fully understood the situation or what to do about it.

In less than twelve years Alexander conquered the Persian empire, a region that included the modern countries of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and parts of former Soviet Turkestan and Uzbekestan. His empire also included a relatively united Greece, the work of his father, Philip II. The Greek city states had by no means willingly or knowingly relinquished their independence to the king of Macedonia, but the great age of Hellenic independence was over. The various city states would continue to pursue the illusion of freedom, but Macedonian hegemony was a fact and would remain a fact until it was superseded by Roman hegemony two centuries later.

The creation of this magnificent empire was an astonishing achievement. It had, however, a disastrous flaw. It was the personal achievement of one man: Alexander the Great. Alexander improvised as he went along. If he adopted Persian or other local customs for governing the new provinces of his vast empire, it was perhaps because it was easier than inventing new systems for control.

As long as Alexander was alive, the strength of his character was able to hold together the disparate regions and their varying administrative systems. Even this was done with great difficulty, and Alexander himself was frequently faced with rebellious satraps. So, after his death, his successors inherited Alexander's problems as well as those of the later Persian emperors. Paramount among these problems was the centrifugal tendency of the empire, the tendency toward decentralization, toward the separation of the provinces into independent kingdoms under autonomous dynasties. Egypt had only recently been reconquered by the Persians, at the time of Alexander's invasion, and India (that part of historic India which corresponds roughly to modern Pakistan) had long since been lost.

Ptolemy, son of Lagus, seems to have been the first of Alexander's successors to understand that the empire would not last as an entity and could not be governed by one man. He alone of the major figures in the first years after Alexander's death seems to have intuitively grasped the idea that this vast creation of the charismatic general would splinter into smaller kingdoms. He chose Egypt as his personal satrapy and never gave way to the temptation to risk his hold on Egypt for a larger share of the empire. It is true that he conquered regions both to the east and west —but only in the interests of a greater Egypt, not in the attempt to gain all of Alexander's empire.

If none of the Diadochi or Successors were as remarkable as Alexander, it does not mean that they were not extraordinary men. The two generations of Macedonians who grew up under Philip II and Alexander the Great included a remarkable number of talented and ambitious men. The death of Alexander without an obvious heir created a situation where many of these men could rise to heights far beyond what they might ordinarily have expected. Had there been fewer of these men of talent and ambition, the struggle for power might have been less destructive.

Macedonia had been ruled by the same dynasty for over three hundred years. It was unthinkable that anyone not of this Argead dynasty should rule the lands of Macedonian conquest. Yet the only candidates from this family were the as yet unborn child of Alexander by the Sogdian princess Roxane and Alexander's feeble-minded half-brother, Arrhidaeus.

Macedonia, unlike the poleis of classical Greece, was a true monarchy. The king, however, was not invariably chosen by the law of primogeniture. The Macedonians needed their king as the commander-in-chief of their army and could not afford the luxury of a lengthy minority. Philip II himself had come to the throne by a ratherindirect route. He had been the guardian of his brother's young son, but had then assumed the kingship with the approval of the army.

## PTOLEMY IN MACEDONIA

Ptolemy was often rumored to be the illegitimate son of Philip II.[3] His mother Arsinoe was probably the king's cousin, and it is entirely possible that her marriage to Lagus was a marriage of convenience, since Lagus seems to have been from a relatively obscure family.[4] The Suda preserves the legend that Lagus, angry over the child's paternity, exposed him. Ptolemy then, according to this story, would have died had he not been saved by an eagle.[5]

On the other hand, it is possible that Ptolemy, or one of his admirers, deliberately encouraged the rumor to enhance his reputation and his claim to the title of king by allowing people to believe that he was Alexander's half-brother.[6] Ptolemy (or Ptolemaios, to use the Greek form) was a common Macedonian name, one just recently held by a king, Philip's stepfather, King Ptolemy (368–365).

Justin's suggestion that Ptolemy's position was obscure, and that Alexander raised him from the ranks of the common soldiers is clearly false.[7] Ptolemy, if not

his father, was part of the Macedonian court, a member of the Royal Pages, and a close companion of the young Alexander, even though he was about ten years his elder.

The Royal Pages or Grooms were the sons of Macedonian nobles whom Philip brought together for the purpose of training future leaders and generals. They were, perhaps, also hostages to prevent the nobles from rebelling. They sat with the king at dinner, handled his horses, accompanied him on the hunt, and generally performed duties for him as his servants and bodyguards.[8]

In addition to Ptolemy, the Royal Pages probably also included Hephaestion, Nearchus, Harpalus, and Philotas.[9] Hephaestion was Alexander's closest friend and probable lover. Alexander reacted to his death in 324 with extravagant grief, which hastened his own death a few months later. Nearchus became Alexander's admiral and accompanied his disastrous march through the Gedrosian Desert (325– 324) by sailing the fleet on the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf from the Indus river to the Tigris.

Nearchus, a Cretan by birth, wrote an account of his voyage that is preserved, in part, in Arrian's *Indica.* Harpalus became Alexander's untrustworthy treasurer, who twice fled his king—apparently to avoid suffering the punishment for extortion. Philotas was the son of Philip's general Parmenion, who later became the commander of the Companion cavalry, the elite, aristocratic inner core of the Macedonian army. He was later implicated in a conspiracy and was executed in 330.

These same individuals probably formed the nucleus of the group who studied with Aristotle at Mieza from *c.* 342.[10] The studies by Aristotle and his pupils probably did not continue after the year 340, at which time Alexander became regent of Macedonia while Philip was on campaign, besieging the cities of Perinthus and Byzantium.

By this time Philip was in control of Thessaly and most of Thrace west of the Chersonese. He had secured a foothold in central Greece, and he had also secured his rear by placing his brother-in-law on the throne of Epirus. Philip II had created a powerful and unprecedented empire out of northern Greece.

By attacking Perinthus on the Sea of Marmara and Byzantium on the Bosphorus, Philip had threatened the Athenian grain route. The Athenians, spurred on by the agitations of Demosthenes, were finally roused into action. They sent aid to the besieged cities and frustrated Philip's efforts there. The Athenians were eventually able to win Thebes over to their cause, but when the decisive battle came at Chaeronea in 338 the Macedonians were victorious.

No surviving, ancient author tells us whether Ptolemy was present at the Battle of Chaeronea, but given that he was probably 29 years of age at the time and that he had a long and distinguished military career ahead of him, it seems overwhelmingly likely. Perhaps it was in the aftermath of that battle that Ptolemy first made the acquaintance of the notorious Athenian *hetaira* Thais who later became his mistress and later still encouraged a drunken Alexander to burn down the palace of Xerxes in Persepolis.

Alexander had won great credit for himself at Chaeronea, but he soon found himself in a bitter domestic squabble with his father. Philip had remarried. The Macedonian kings were polygamous, but this new alliance threatened, to some extent, Alexander's inheritance of the throne.

Alexander, perhaps in response to this threat, began to intrigue behind his father's back. He made overtures to Pixodarus, the satrap of Caria, concerning a possible marriage between himself and the satrap's daughter. Philip had planned to marry off his retarded son Arrhidaeus to the girl, and, according to Plutarch, he did not wish Alexander to marry "the slave of a barbarian king."[11] Whatever his motive, Philip became angry about this incident and banished Ptolemy and three other of Alexander's companions.[12] Alexander had already left Macedonia and was living in Illyria.[13] Perhaps Ptolemy joined him there.

Philip was assassinated in 336, and Ptolemy was soon recalled by Alexander, now king of Macedonia.[14] Ptolemy probably took part in Alexander's campaign against Thebes in 335. Arrian[15] cites him as his source for the events surrounding the sack of Thebes, and his circumstantial handling of the episode suggests that Ptolemy had firsthand knowledge. Perdiccas, later Ptolemy's enemy, led the assault and was seriously wounded in the battle.

## THE MACEDONIAN OCCUPATION OF EGYPT

In 334 Alexander crossed the Hellespont and began the conquest of Persia. Ptolemy does not appear to have played a major role in the early campaigns in Asia. We cannot even be certain that he accompanied Alexander in his descent into Egypt, but it is entirely possible. In 323 Ptolemy wasted no time in choosing Egypt for his province. This fact would be easier to understand if the satrap had already had firsthand knowledge of the region. In addition, Arrian cites Ptolemy for certain details which suggest his presence in Egypt.[16]

Except for relatively brief periods of independence, Egypt had been dominated by foreign rulers for six centuries. Libyans, Ethiopians and Assyrians had, in turn, ruled over the valley of the Nile. The Persians under Cambyses conquered Egypt in 525, but had lost control of the province by 410. The Persians made several attempts to reconquer Egypt, but did not succeed in doing so until 343, only twelve years before the country fell to the Macedonians.

Alexander had already defeated the Persians in two decisive battles, at the Granicus River in 334 and at Issus in the early fall of 333. In the latter battle the Great King of Persia, Darius III, had fled from the battlefield. Rather than pursue him into Persia itself, Alexander decided to secure Syria, Phoenicia, and Egypt. The Persians depended primarily upon the Phoenicians for their navy. Alexander's plan was that, in taking the eastern Mediterranean coast, he would not only be securing his rear, but would also be destroying Persian naval power. Alexander's most celebrated exploit in this campaign was the siege of the Phoenician city of Tyre, which required most of the first half of the year 332. After he took Tyre, only the border fortress of Gaza stood between Alexander and Egypt.

Gaza, which was held by a Persian governor and Arab mercenaries, also required a siege, this one lasting two months. The siege was unusually brutal and did not end until the entire male population, mainly Persian and Arab,[17] had been killed and the women and children sold into slavery.[18]

The Macedonians also suffered heavy losses, and Alexander himself was twice wounded. But after the fall of Gaza Alexander's conquest of Egypt was merely a victory parade. He first marched to Pelusium at the eastern edge of the Nile delta. This is the site where invasions of Egypt were often won or lost. The army of Artaxerxes III had defeated the army of Pharaoh Nectanebos (both armies being dominated by Greek mercenaries) here in 343, thus finally winning Egypt back into the Persian empire after over sixty years of independence.[19] Alexander met no opposition here. The Egyptians turned out to welcome him; many doubtless believed that the Macedonians represented a considerable improvement on the Persians.

Alexander garrisoned Pelusium, and the site remained an essential element of the Macedonian control of Egypt. He proceeded to Memphis by way of Heliopolis. Memphis, one of the oldest cities in the world, had been the capital of the earliest Pharaohs, including those Fourth Dynasty Pharaohs who had built the great Pyramids at nearby Giza. The city stood near the southern extremity of the Nile delta on the western bank of the river, somewhat to the south of present-day Cairo. It was a convenient site then to control both Upper (i.e. southern) Egypt and Lower Egypt (i.e. the delta). Under the Persians, Memphis had once more become the capital city.

The Great King of Persia was formally considered the pharaoh of Egypt, but the country was governed by a satrap. The previous satrap, Sabaces, had taken what native forces there were in Egypt and led them to aid Darius at Issus. Sabaces, who was killed in that battle, left behind him Mazaces as the last Persian satrap of Egypt. Mazaces, who was left without any forces or any hope of Persian support, had little choice but to welcome Alexander and to turn over his capital city and his treasury to him.[20] No reliable ancient source states that Alexander was crowned as Pharaoh while in Memphis, although it is mentioned in *The Romance of Alexander*.[21] This source should not ordinarily be taken very seriously, but it is entirely possible that Alexander did assume the title and duties of the king of Egypt. Inscriptions on Egyptian temples later proclaimed Alexander as Pharaoh, and it is certain that the Egyptians would have accepted him as their Pharaoh whether or not he underwent a formal coronation.

Alexander's most celebrated exploit while in Egypt was his trip to the Temple of Ammon at Siwah in the Libyan Desert. Ammon (orAmon) was the principal deity of the city of Thebes and had been of paramount importance in Egyptian religion since the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (*c.* 2050 BC). At Siwah the Theban god was probably merged with a local god Amun, a god with ram's horns on his head.[22]

Ammon was introduced into the Greek world most probably by way of Cyrene, a Greek colony in Libya. Ammon became associated with Zeus and was depicted

as a Greek god with ram's horns. In the fourth century, there were temples to Zeus-Ammon in the Piraeus and at Aphytis in Chalcidice, and the Athenians had named one of their state triremes after the Egyptian god.[23] Alexander went to the oracle at Siwah, some five hundred miles from Memphis, for no known military objective. The priest at the temple apparently addressed the Macedonian as the son of the god. Alexander may have gone to Siwah for precisely this reason: to reinforce an image, perhaps already introduced in Macedonia, of himself as the son of Zeus.

As the successor to the Pharaohs, Alexander could rightfully claim to be a living god, but this tradition was foreign to Greeks and Macedonians alike. But the god of Siwah had already been praised by Pindar and Herodotus and was thought to be much closer to the Greek concept of divinity. Perhaps Alexander was stumbling toward some view of himself as a semi-divine ruler over a vast empire of diverse peoples and cultures. If so, the lesson was not lost on Ptolemy who would later institute the Greco-Egyptian cult of Isis and Sarapis, and who came to rule Egypt as the first Pharaoh of the last dynasty.

Whether Alexander planned the future capital city of Egypt before or after visiting Siwah is disputed by our sources.[24] Arrian and Plutarch both say that he picked the site for Alexandria first, but Justin, Diodorus, and Curtius maintain that he went first to the oracle of Zeus—Ammon.[25] But all of our sources agree that Alexander took an active interest in the planning of the first and greatest of the many cities that would bear his name. He built the city near the Canopic mouth of the Nile between Lake Mareotis and the sea, just behind the island of Pharos. He designed the shape of the town and even the pattern of the streets. Diodorus says that he designed the streets in such a way as to maximize the effect of the etesian winds, so that the city would stay relatively cool.[26] Alexander indicated the appropriate places to build walls, a palace, temples to the Greek gods, and even a temple to the Egyptian goddess Isis.[27]

Before leaving Egypt, Alexander attempted to organize the government of the country. He did not choose a satrap, as he usually did for the other former provinces of the Persian empire. Instead he chose two nomarchs (one of whom declined the office), two garrison commanders and two overseers, among other officers, with the apparent intention of dividing the country into two parts. Arrian thought that Alexander divided the command in Egypt in this unusual manner in order to prevent a separatist movement in such a rich province;[28] just as later the Romans avoided appointing a governor of the region from the senatorial class for fear of the same eventuality. If this was Alexander's motive, he was not successful, for one man did come to dominate Egypt. Cleomenes was a Greek from Naucratis, the Greek trading center in Egypt. Alexander made him the treasurer of the entire country, the man to whom all the tribute was paid. Cleomenes was also put in charge of the desert regions east of the Nile and of the building of Alexandria, but it was by his position as head of Egypt's finances that he came to dominate the country.

## THE MACEDONIAN OCCUPATION OF PERSIA

Alexander next met Darius in 331 at Gaugamela, in the decisive battle of the Macedonian conquest. Darius fled the field of battle and left the way open for Alexander to enter the Persian capital cities of Babylon, Susa, and Persepolis. The Great King had often resided in Susa in the winter, but Persepolis was the spiritual center of the Persian empire. Perhaps it is not so strange that it was here that Alexander allowed looting and even encouraged the burning of the palace of Xerxes.

Ptolemy's own account of Alexander the Great has come down to us only indirectly, through the work of Arrian. Arrian's account of the burning of the palace at Persepolis is quite brief. In this account Alexander ordered the destruction as a deliberate act of policy; it was in retaliation for Xerxes' burning of Athens in 480. The other versions of this story are quite different and center around Thais, the mistress of Ptolemy.[29] Thais was an Athenian *hetaira,* and it is possible that Ptolemy met her in the aftermath of the Battle of Chaeronea or perhaps later, after the destruction of Thebes in 335. She complains of her many hardships in wandering through Asia,[30] which may mean that she had been with Ptolemy since the beginning of the campaign.

At a drinking party immortalized through the poetry of John Dryden and the music of George Frederick Handel, Thais was allowed to make a speech in praise of Alexander. All of the difficulties of the campaign had been justified in her estimation by the joy she felt in reveling in the royal palaces of the Persians. The only joy that could exceed this one, Thais continued, would be to set fire to the building and watch it burn. She would feel great personal satisfaction if she, an Athenian woman, could do what no Athenian general had ever done and finally take vengeance on Xerxes for the destruction of Athens in 480. Her speech was greeted with wild applause, and Alexander himself, excited by wine and the enthusiasm of the occasion, led the way.

> And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
> Thais led the way,
> To light him to his prey,
> And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.[31]

This episode, so rich in drama and detail, should not be dismissed lightly. Epigraphy attests to the historical reality of Thais,[32] who bore Ptolemy three children.[33] If Ptolemy's own account of this event did not stress the role of Thais, we should not be surprised, since the act is hardly a credit to Ptolemy's mistress. His version of the story adds that Alexander repented his action. The burning of Persepolis, now Alexander's, not Darius' city, makes more sense as a foolish impulse performed by a group of drunken revelers than it does as a deliberate act of policy.[34] The circumstantial detail in this version also argues in its favor. Even the sober Arrian, after giving Ptolemy's version of the story, feels compelled to

add that he personally believes that it was not a good policy, and that one could not really punish Persians who had been dead for over a century.[35]

About two months after the burning of Persepolis, Darius was murdered by a group of his followers led by Bessus, the satrap of Bactria. Bessus was related to the royal family, and the handful of leaders who still planned to resist the Macedonian conquest no longer put any faith in Darius' ability to rule. Bessus assumed the role of Great King and claimed to be the successor of Darius.

Alexander set out to pursue Bessus and, at the same time, to secure the eastern provinces of the Persian empire. While pursuing these goals, Alexander was faced with a conspiracy that seemed to compromise the integrity of one of his most important officers.

Philotas, the commander of the Companion Cavalry and the son of Parmenion, Alexander's most prestigious and powerful general, failed to report a conspiracy to Alexander. Parmenion was apparently innocent, and the degree of Philotas' involvement is difficult to judge at this late date, but Alexander had both father and son put to death, as well as several other individuals who were implicated in the affair. One of these individuals was Demetrius, a *somatophylax* or member of theRoyal Bodyguards. The Royal Bodyguards formed the inner core of the Companion Cavalry and represented the king's closest advisers.

Ptolemy succeeded Demetrius and so became, by the fall of 330, a high-ranking leader in the Macedonian army. This is not surprising considering Ptolemy's close personal relationship with Alexander. In fact, it may seem a little strange that it took him so long to get promoted.[36] One factor may be that Alexander had to mediate between the claims of two different generations. Many of the high-ranking generals like Parmenion belonged to his father's generation and had fought many campaigns under Philip. In the aftermath of the Philotas—Parmenion affair, Alexander split Philotas' position as commander of the Companion Cavalry between two men: Clitus, of Philip's generation, and Hephaestion, Alexander's own best friend.

It has also been suggested that, in an age of great generals, Ptolemy showed no "early display of military genius."[37] This view is consistent with Curtius' characterization of Ptolemy as a fine soldier who was nonetheless modest and unassuming.[38] Steadfastness to duty and level-headedness were his virtues, not brilliance. Ptolemy, according to this portrait, was a man of the people who never lost the common touch or assumed the affectations of the powerful.

In his history, Curtius is often guilty of moralizing and creating dubious characterizations in order to make his narrative more interesting, but in this case the portrait has the ring of truth. Ptolemy was about 37 years old at this time. His rise to the top had been slow, if judged by the standards of his day. Curtius may even be using Ptolemy as a deliberate foil to Alexander, whom the historian believed to have been corrupted by rising too high too fast.

Ptolemy's absence, in the ancient sources, from the often acrimonious debates of the generals under Alexander argues for his modesty and steadfastness. The one time he did get involved in an altercation was when he attempted to restrain

Alexander from killing Clitus.[39] Also, his long and successful rule in Egypt suggests that he was not a mercurial figure like Alexander or Demetrius Poliorcetes, but rather a cautious, temperate man of few whims who had full control of his emotions and few illusions about his exalted state.

Alexander pursued Bessus into Bactria. Bessus retreated into Sogdiana, across the Oxus River, and Alexander followed him there also. Messengers from two of Bessus' leading generals, Spitamenes and Dataphernes, told Alexander that they would hand Bessus over to him if he sent a small force ahead to receive the captive.

Alexander chose Ptolemy to lead the expedition. Ptolemy's account[40] of this incident may have exaggerated his own role. According to Ptolemy, Spitamenes and Dataphernes either changed their minds or lost their courage. Ptolemy was forced to surround the village and to promise the inhabitants that they would not be harmed if they would simply hand Bessus over. The village accepted Ptolemy's offer, opened their gates to him, and gave him Bessus as a prisoner.

Ptolemy then sent a message to Alexander asking him what to do with Bessus. Alexander said that Bessus should be bound, forced to wear a wooden collar, and made to stand naked by the side of the road where the king and his army would pass. Ptolemy did as Alexander wished, and when the king came across Bessus he asked him why he had killed Darius. Bessus claimed that he was trying to win Alexander's favor. Alexander, who now thought of himself as Darius' successor, was not pleased with Bessus' answer and sent him first to Bactria and later to Ecbatana, where he was executed.

Arrian, after giving us Ptolemy's account of this incident, adds that Aristobulus, another of his sources, emphasized the roles of Spitamenes and Dataphernes in leading Bessus bound and naked to Alexander. None of the other accounts[41] mentions Ptolemy in connection with the capture of Bessus. At the time that Ptolemy wrote his history of Alexander's campaigns, there were certainly still veterans alive who could remember such a dramatic event. It seems unlikely that Ptolemy would have created this episode out of nothing. He probably was sent by Alexander to arrest Bessus, but it is certainly possible that Ptolemy exaggerated the difficulty of his mission. Spitamenes and Dataphernes probably did betray Bessus, and Ptolemy's role consisted more in retrieving the prisoner than it did in besieging the village.

Alexander remained in the northwestern regions of Bactria and Sogdiana for about two years, from 329 to 327. It was here, in a fit of drunken anger, that he killed Clitus, a general who had been close to his family and who had saved his life at the Battle of the Granicus River. Here too he married Roxane, a Sogdian aristocrat who bore his only heir, Alexander IV.

Sometime between these two events, European people made their first recorded encounter with petroleum. Proxenus, one of Alexander's servants, was pitching his master's tent near the Oxus River when he discovered a spring of oil bubbling up from the ground.[42] Ptolemy heard about this event and reported it to Alexander. Alexander thought that it was a favorable omen and wrote to Antipater, his regent in Macedonia, that it was one of the best signs that the gods had ever sent him.

Aristander, his seer, said that it boded difficulties to come, but also eventual victory.

## PTOLEMY'S ROLE IN THE INDIAN CAMPAIGN

If Aristander was foretelling the outcome of the Indian invasion, his prophecy was reasonably accurate. In these campaigns Ptolemy took a more active part, distinguishing himself particularly at the siege of the Aornus Rock in the winter of 327–326. The Aornus Rock, which has been identified as Pir Sar in northern Pakistan, was seemingly impregnable, and Alexander's capture of it was one of his most impressive achievements.

The rock is sheer on all sides and tapers like a cone to a sharp peak. Neighboring tribesmen offered to lead the Macedonians to a place on the rock from where the resisting Indians could be successfully attacked. Alexander chose Ptolemy to lead a group of soldiers and to go with the tribesmen in order to secure the position. Ptolemy did secure the position and built a stockade to defend himself.

On the next day, Alexander tried to storm the rock from a different angle but was unsuccessful and was forced to retreat. The Indians then attacked Ptolemy and tried to tear down his stockade. Ptolemy held his ground, and the Indians were forced to retreat. The next day Alexander tried again, and this time he was able to join forces with Ptolemy. From this position Alexander began to build enormous mounds, in an attempt to reach the level of the peak of the rock. Fearing Alexander's resolution and his superior forces, the Indians sued for peace, but they planned to escape during the negotiations. Alexander found out about their intentions and attacked them while they were retreating. In this manner Alexander and Ptolemy succeeded in taking the rock that Heracles himself, according to one story, had failed to capture.[44]

Curtius and Diodorus report a curious story about an attack upon the Brahmin city of Harmatelia that would have occurred about a year later.[45] The city was taken without great difficulty, but the Brahmins used a poison derived from snake venom on their swords. All of the men who were wounded, whether their wound had been large or small, were dying a painful and terrible death.

Ptolemy was one of the wounded, and Alexander was particularly concerned about his welfare. He had a bed brought into Ptolemy's tent and personally watched over him. While sleeping on this bed, Alexander had a dream in which a snake appeared, carrying a plant in its mouth. The snake indicated that the plant was an antidote and showed him where it grew. Alexander awoke, found the plant and applied it to Ptolemy's body. He also had a liquid prepared and gave it to Ptolemy to drink. Ptolemy recovered, and the antidote was then given to the other wounded men, who recovered as well.

The accuracy of this episode has understandably been called into question. It presents a number of difficult and intriguing problems. Does such an antidote exist? Is it possible that Alexander ever had such a dream, and, if not, what was the fictional dream meant to signify? Why is this episode, apparently favorable to

Ptolemy, not to be found in the pages of Arrian, the extant writer who most closely follows him? The location of Harmatelia is also a problem. Diodorus and Curtius place it in the lower Indus, but its exact site remains a mystery.

H.Bretzl has identified the plant in Alexander's dream as *Nerium odorum Sol.,* a type of oleander.[46] It is possible then that such an antidote could have been used against snake poison. Alexander's dream, however, has usually been dismissed as fiction. Tarn considered the dream Ptolemaic propaganda. He identified the snake with Psois, an Egyptian snake god who had associations with both Ptolemais, a city founded by and named after Ptolemy I, and Sarapis, a god who was capable of assuming a snake form.[47] At first glance this theory seems unlikely, since Arrian, who most closely follows Ptolemy, omits the story altogether. However, it is entirely possible, as Tarn himself admits, that the story originated not in Ptolemy's history, but in some later Ptolemaic source.

P.H.L.Eggermont's study of this episode is both fascinating and sound.[48] Not surprisingly, he finds both historical and fictional elements in the narrative. Eggermont concludes that Alexander did besiege Harmatelia, but that this town was in Baluchistan (i.e. Gedrosia), not in the lower Indus region.[49] He accepts Bretzl's idea that the plant in question is *Nerium odorum Sol.,* and demonstrates that it is native to Gedrosia and is mentioned by the ancient sources exclusively in connection with that region.[50]

## PTOLEMY AND THE LAST TWO YEARS OF ALEXANDER'S LIFE

If Eggermont is right, and I think he is, then Ptolemy must have taken part in Alexander's disastrous march through the Gedrosian Desert.[51] Here, Alexander's army suffered more from heat and thirst than it had ever suffered from human enemies. The beasts of burden died also. The men ate these animals eagerly and even killed them on purpose to prevent starvation.

This, however, made the situation worse. It became impossible to rescue stragglers, and so the army had to abandon the sick and exhausted. When water was available, the men often drank excessively and died of overindulgence. The desert trip lasted about two months, and by the fall of 325 Alexander and the survivors returned to the heart of the empire.

Ptolemy remained one of the Royal Bodyguards, a group that was expanded at this time from seven to eight. Alexander added Peucestas, who had saved his life in India, to the group that also included Hephaestion, Lysimachus, Perdiccas, and Pithon among others.[52] Peucestas later became the satrap of Persis and shocked some of his fellow Macedonians by speaking the Persian language and wearing Persian attire.

During this period (325–323), there were not many military campaigns. Alexander was concerned with administering his empire, which had fallen into great turmoil while he was away in India. Many satraps and other officials had either rebelled or participated in flagrant misconduct. Harpalus, Alexander's

treasurer and boyhood friend, was one of these officials guilty of misconduct. He fled to Athens and from there to Crete, where he was eventually killed by one of his own officers.

One of Ptolemy's most unusual duties at this time was his supervision of the building of a funeral pyre for an ascetic Indian sage named Calanus.[53] When Alexander was near Taxila in India he came upon some Hindu wisemen. These gurus wore no clothes and so were called Gymnosophists or Naked Philosophers. Alexander admired their self-control and persuaded one, Calanus, to accompany his expedition back to Persia.

Calanus became sick after he reached Persia and requested a funeral pyre on which he could commit himself to the flames while still alive. Ptolemy arranged an elaborate ceremony, complete with trumpeters and elephants, which was attended by the entire army. Calanus, too sick to walk, was carried in on a litter. Chanting in his native language, Calanus met his end, we are told, without displaying any outward signs of pain.

An even more elaborate ceremony took place in Susa in the spring of 324.[54] Alexander married Darius' oldest daughter, Stateira, and Parysatis, the youngest daughter of the previous Great King, Artaxerxes III. In addition, he persuaded eighty or ninety[55] of his leading officers to take Persian wives in this elaborate marriage feast to which thousands of guests were invited. In this ceremony, Ptolemy married Artacama, the daughter of Artabazus.

Although we do not know much about Artacama, we know a great deal about her father. Artabazus (*c.*387–*c.*325) was the son of Pharnabazus, the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, who, at the request of Lysander, had ordered the assassination of Alcibiades in 404 at the end of the Peloponnesian War. Artabazus was appointed as satrap to the same region as his father by Artaxerxes II. He rebelled under Artaxerxes III and sought refuge for a while in Macedonia during the reign of Philip II. Barsine, another of Artabazus' daughters, may have been the mistress of Alexander.[56] Artabazus served as satrap of Bactria under Alexander, but resigned in 328 and was probably dead by the time of this marriage.

Since nothing else is heard of Artacama, it seems likely that Ptolemy repudiated her shortly after Alexander's death. On the other hand, it seems probable that he continued his relationship with Thais, which may even have taken on some quasi-legal status.[57] Thais bore Ptolemy at least three children, none of whom seems to have been rejected by their father, although they were probably not legitimized. Lagus, named after his grandfather, won a chariot race in the Lycaea, an Arcadian festival, in 308/307.[58] Since Ptolemy himself went to Greece at that time, it is highly possible that Lagus accompanied him.[59] Leontiscus was another of the children of Ptolemy and Thais. He was taken prisoner in Cyprus by Demetrius Poliorcetes in 307 or 306 and later sent home to his father.[60] Thais also had a daughter by Ptolemy, Eirene, who was married to Eunostus, the king of Soli in Cyprus.[61]

In Ecbatana, a few months after the wedding feast, Alexander's best friend and probable lover Hephaestion died. Alexander's grief was extreme. He stayed with

the body for two days and refused to eat during that time. Alexander ordered mourning throughout Persia. He would not, at first, appoint anyone to Hephaestion's position as *chiliarch* or grand vizier. This position eventually went to Perdiccas, and it may be that at this time Alexander appointed Ptolemy as *edeatros* or steward.[62]

Alexander continued to grieve throughout the fall of 324. Finally, in the winter, he launched a campaign against the Cossaeans, a group of mountaineering bandits who lived southwest of Ecbatana. Ptolemy took a prominent role in this campaign. Plutarch says that they exterminated the Cossaeans as a tribute to Hephaestion.[63] Arrian,however, says that Alexander built them cities and tried to encourage them to live in a civilized manner.[64]

After the Cossaean campaign, Alexander returned to Babylon. On the way back and later, after he arrived there, he received delegations from the Greeks and from other western powers. There can be no doubt that Hephaestion was still very much on his mind. Alexander designed a great monument and a lavish funeral in his honor. He sent messengers to Siwah to inquire what homage should be paid to the dead Hephaestion. The answer came back from Ammon that he should be worshiped as a hero or demigod.[65]

About this time, according to Arrian, Alexander wrote a letter to Cleomenes, now the virtual satrap of Egypt.[66] Alexander instructed Cleomenes to create two shrines in honor of Hephaestion: one was to be in the city of Alexandria and the other on the island of Pharos. The letter continues that, if Alexander is happy with Cleomenes' work, he will forgive all his wrongdoings, both past and future. This seems like such an outrageous promise, and one so untypical of Alexander, that it rouses suspicion. Arrian, probably following Ptolemy, paints a very negative picture of Cleomenes. Since Ptolemy had him put to death after he went to Egypt, he would have had good reason to publicize any information that tended to worsen Cleomenes' reputation. This and other questions of bias in the work of Ptolemy the historian will be discussed in the next chapter.

In May of 323, not long after he received permission from Siwah to initiate a cult to Hephaestion, Alexander joined Medius, one of his officers, in a drinking party that apparently went on for two straight nights. The next day he had a fever. He might have caught malaria, but we cannot know for certain what disease it was. After less than two weeks he was dead. Arrian records, not on the best testimony (that is, not according to Ptolemy or Aristobulus), that Alexander made two statements before he died. When asked to whom he would leave his empire, Alexander replied, “To the strongest.” He also reportedly said that after he died there would be great funeral games.

These statements are probably apocryphal, but they are appropriate. The funeral games, to decide the best man, would last for over twenty years. Even after this long period, no single best man would emerge. After much of the empire had been lost, and many of Macedonia's ablest men had died in the contest, what was left of the empire was divided among the victors and an uneasy and fragile peace was declared.

# 2
# PTOLEMY THE HISTORIAN

## THE "GOOD" TRADITION

We do not know at what point in his life Ptolemy wrote his history of the wars of Alexander the Great. Although the work is mentioned by other ancient writers, Arrian is our only reliable source for information on it. Even in Arrian the number of actual references is not large. There used to be consensus about Ptolemy, a consensus that was epitomized, perhaps, in the work of W.W.Tarn.[1]

Until recently it was widely believed that Ptolemy wrote his history late in his life. Ptolemy wrote, it was believed, to set the record straight, because already many wild and fantastic stories were circulating about Alexander's exploits. Ptolemy wrote an objective, accurate account of Alexander's reign, stressing the military aspects. Perhaps he exaggerated his own role in these campaigns at the expense of his fellow generals, but we would expect the same from the memoirs of any important public figure. Ptolemy admired and defended Alexander without making him a superhuman figure. It was said, in fact, that these were his major goals: to answer certain unfounded attacks, but at the same time to preserve the historical Alexander from the mythmakers and creators of fantasy.

Ptolemy, in short, was the chief source for the "good" tradition. "Good" because he presented a favorable portrait of Alexander, and "good" also because he wrote accurately and objectively.

This consensus is now under attack in the work of Ernst Badian and his followers. Badian has created a new interpretation of Ptolemy's history. He sees Ptolemy's work as biased, deceitful, and essentially polemic in nature. Badian speculates that Ptolemy's history might have been written in the 320s or shortly after and may represent propaganda against his enemies Perdiccas and Antigonus.[2]

This debate over Ptolemy's history is not insignificant. Tarn was a great admirer of Alexander and consequently an admirer of his apologist. Badian, as a detractor of Alexander, wants to deflate Ptolemy and to seek for a true portrait of the conqueror among those works that are less flattering. Before we pursue the search for lost histories, however, perhaps we should briefly mention the connected accounts of Alexander that are extant.

## THE SURVIVING EVIDENCE

Diodorus of Agyrium in Sicily lived at the time of Julius and Augustus Caesar. He wrote *The Library of History* in forty books, which spanned known history from the earliest times in Egypt and Greece down to, at least, the Catilinarian conspiracy of 63 BC, and perhaps to Caesar's conquest of Gaul. Much of the work is lost, but the extant portions include the reign of Alexander and the wars of the Diadochi down to *c.* 302. Diodorus was not an original thinker, and his work is only as good as whatever historian or historians he was copying at the time.

Cleitarchus is the only source Diodorus mentions in Book XVII, his book on Alexander. Estimates vary widely as to what other historians Diodorus followed in this book. Tarn thought that Diodorus followed Aristobulus, Cleitarchus, and an otherwise unknown "mercenaries' source."[3] He thought that Diodorus presented an inconsistent portrait of Alexander by mixing the favorable account of Aristobulus with the unfavorable account of Cleitarchus. Tarn's ideas on the "mercenaries' source" and on the mixed portrait have not found wide acceptance, but most modern historians agree that Diodorus used Cleitarchus and one or more of the other lost histories.

Quintus Curtius Rufus wrote his history of Alexander in the early Roman empire some time between the reign of Augustus and that of Vespasian. Curtius was a moralist, and he wished to show that Alexander was corrupted by power, and that he gradually and consistently deteriorated from a moderate young man to a tyrant. His history is full of sensational events, and is quite entertaining to read.

Justin, who lived in the second or third century AD wrote an epitome of the *Historiae Philippicae* of Pompeius Trogus. The original, although including many anecdotes and digressions, was essentially a history of Macedonia, with an emphasis on Philip and Alexander. Justin's epitome is a most unsatisfactory and unreliable source. His work may not be, as Tarn called it, a "mass of rubbish," but Justin has yet to receive even qualified admiration.[4]

Diodorus, Curtius, and Justin represent what is often called the "vulgate" tradition. Although many modern historians are uncomfortable with this rubric, it is difficult to dismiss the impression that the three accounts are strikingly similar in attitude and in many details. If there is a common source, it is most often believed to be that of Cleitarchus of Alexandria, whose work combined sensationalism with an unfavorable portrait of Alexander. Of the three extant authors, Curtius is the one who perhaps best represents the "vulgate" tradition. Badian, while warning that Curtius is not to be accepted uncritically, has tended to rehabilitate his reputation as a counterweight to the Ptolemy—Arrian tradition.[5]

Plutarch spent most of his life (*c.* 46–c. 120 AD) in or around the Boeotian city of Chaeronea, site of Philip II's famous victory over the Greeks in 338 BC. As a cultured Greek of the era of Trajan and Hadrian, Plutarch admired the Romans but also wanted to remind them of the past glories of Greece. Of the lives that he wrote, four separate lives and twenty-two pairs survive (or twenty-three if we

count Agis and Cleomenes and Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus as two pairs). The life of a notable Roman is compared with that of an equally distinguished Greek.

Plutarch's life of Alexander (who is compared to Julius Caesar) is one of his longest and most important biographies. In its first chapter, he sets out his basic technique. He is interested in character. Plutarch does not feel compelled to relate even the most important events of a man's life, since a small incident or anecdote may reveal more of a man's character than his most brilliant actions. Plutarch's life of Alexander is not entirely reliable, but it is, in spite of its author's qualifications, a coherent, reasonably chronological, and significant document. However, because of Plutarch's stated concerns, it does not fit into either the "vulgate" or the "good" tradition.

Flavius Arrianus was born in the Bithynian city of Nicomedia. He was a Greek who enjoyed Roman citizenship and lived to be both consul at Rome and archon at Athens. He was also governor of the Roman province of Cappadocia under the Emperor Hadrian. Arrian was a student of the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, whose teachings he preserved for us in the *Discourses*.

Arrian modeled himself on Xenophon, which is why his history of Alexander is usually known as his *Anabasis*. He begins the work with his methodology. Wherever Ptolemy and Aristobulus agree, Arrian has no fear that the account is accurate. If his two major sources disagree, he will choose the one that seems most likely and most interesting. He considers Ptolemy and Aristobulus to be the most reliable sources, and of the two Ptolemy is preferable since it is more shameful for a king to tell a lie.

Arrian's motive in choosing Ptolemy as his primary source strikes the modern ear as naive, if not perhaps even ludicrous. But Arrian's history is not ludicrous. It is a sober and factual account of Alexander's reign which emphasizes military matters in great detail. Far from stooping to the sort of fabulous and miraculous stories present in the other histories of Alexander, Arrian's narrative is so meticulous that it turns what should be exciting into something dry and, frankly, tedious.

Since Aristobulus was apparently an architect or technician of some sort, it is generally assumed that Ptolemy was Arrian's chief source for military matters. This assumption is tempting, but since Arrian never says that he will follow Ptolemy on all military matters, we should proceed with caution. It is a mistake to assume that Arrian is, in any sense, a paraphrase of Ptolemy.

## THE FRAGMENTS OF PTOLEMY'S HISTORY OF ALEXANDER

One of the most discussed fragments concerns the role of Perdiccas in the Battle of Thebes in 335. Arrian, citing Ptolemy, says that Perdiccas led the decisive charge against the Thebans on his own initiative.[6] This episode is not to be found in Curtius since it would have occurred in the first two books, which are lost.

Diodorus' account suggests that Perdiccas acted only under the orders of Alexander.[7]

At first glance, this might seem like a relatively minor discrepancy, the sort that occurs with great frequency among the ancient historians. But scholars have built enormous edifices on less promising material. Badian first suggested that Ptolemy might have written his history at the time (321 BC) that he captured Alexander's body and brought it to Egypt.[8] Later he expanded the possibilities by suggesting that Ptolemy's history might have been written any time from the taking of Alexander's body in 322 down till 308.[9]

Badian correctly points out that there is no evidence that Ptolemy wrote his history in his old age, but nor is there any evidence to support his suggestion of 321.

R.M.Errington elaborates on Badian's theory, and states that this "Alexander-centered history assumes its greatest relevance" in the context of Ptolemy's conflict with Perdiccas (321–320) and its immediate aftermath.[10] The clear implication is that Ptolemy wants to create a very negative portrait of Perdiccas, and that this is one of his primary goals in writing. The destruction of Thebes was a major blot on Alexander's record. If the Greeks chose to see Alexander as a tyrant, there was no better example than this. Ptolemy, it is suggested, was trying to create the impression that Perdiccas, his rival, was really the person who was responsible for this heinous act.

Joseph Roisman's response to these charges is, in my opinion, irrefutable.[11] Roisman argues convincingly that no objective reader of Arrian would conclude that Perdiccas was primarily responsible for the destruction of Thebes. Arrian clearly suggests that the Thebans themselves were to blame. Further, no one in the ancient world would have been fooled. In Roisman's words, "the Macedonians felt no remorse for the fate of the city, while the Greeks held no one but Alexander responsible for its destruction."[12]

The extant fragments of Ptolemy's history of Alexander do not add up to a coherent whole. It takes a great leap of faith to draw any inspiring conclusions from this unpromising collection. Roisman's approach is the most sensible. Even if one takes the broadest possible context from Arrian's *Anabasis,* by including the material surrounding each example, the fragments do not add up to a topical piece of propaganda.

Is it really so surprising that Ptolemy would emphasize his own deeds in the campaigns of Alexander? Is it surprising that he would minimize the accomplishments of his rival, Perdiccas? The reader comes away from Ptolemy's fragments, as from Arrian's narrative, mainly with the feeling that he has read a sober, factual, no-nonsense account of an extraordinary sequence of events in human history.

There is not one single shred of evidence to prove the date of composition. However, it seems unlikely that Ptolemy could find the time to write in the early, chaotic years of his governorship of Egypt. Even more unlikely is it that he could find time to write a full-length history when, without much warning, his province

was about to be invaded by Perdiccas, who, at that moment, was the most powerful man on earth.

Some have suggested that Ptolemy, in writing his book, was making a claim to be the successor of Alexander.[13] This is true, but only Alexander's successor as pharaoh of Egypt. There is no evidence that Ptolemy ever considered making a bid to succeed Alexander as king of the entire far-flung empire, which stretched from Macedonia to India. There is every indication that Ptolemy was content to remain in Egypt, as satrap, as king, as pharaoh. The title did not matter.

We cannot know when he wrote his history. We cannot be overly confident of its purpose or content. We would expect a book which reflected the personality of its author. We would expect a calm, factual, level-headed account by a practical soldier and magistrate. A man who was not in a hurry. A cautious, patient, but surely not unbiased man, who told the truth from his own point of view.

# 3
# THE SUCCESSORS

## THE STRONGEST

Less than a year before his death, Alexander had sent Craterus home to Macedonia to replace Antipater as regent. Antipater's influence in Macedonia and in Greece had become enormous. He was one of the few members of Philip II's generation who remained among the most powerful of Macedonia's leaders.

When Philip had appointed Alexander, at the age of 16, as regent in his absence, Antipater was the young man's adviser. When Alexander visited Athens, as Macedonia's ambassador, immediately after the Battle of Chaeronea in 338, Antipater was at his side. And when Alexander began his conquest of Persia in 334, he left Antipater behind as his regent.

For almost twelve years, Antipater had been the virtual dictator of Macedonia and Greece. He had made enemies in Greece by his autocratic methods and his support of oligarchic governments. But he had also won admiration for his defeat of the Spartan resistance in 331. By 323 his control of the Greek mainland must have appeared both personal and absolute.

Alexander may have wanted to make certain that Macedonia was still loyal, not to Antipater, but to himself. Antipater was ordered to bring new recruits to Asia,[1] although Curtius reports a rumor that Craterus was given secret instructions to murder Antipater.[2]

There can be little doubt that, next to Alexander, Antipater was the strongest man in the empire. Next to Antipater, Craterus was the strongest. With the death of Philotas and Hephaestion, Craterus had risen to the top of the younger generation of men under Alexander. He was second only to the king and often held independent commands. Alexander had sent his best man on the difficult assignment of unseating Antipater.

Some have even speculated that when Alexander was asked to whom he should leave his kingdom, rather than saying *kratisto* ("to the strongest"), as it was reported, probably by Perdiccas, he was actually trying to say "to Craterus."[3] Although this theory must remain unproven, there can be little doubt that had he been present in Babylon, Craterus, and not Perdiccas, would have received the symbolic ring of power.

Perdiccas had been at Alexander's side for a long time. He had been there in Aegae in 336 on the occasion of the wedding of Alexander of Epirus to Cleopatra, the wedding that had culminated in the assassination of Philip II. Perdiccas had, in fact, been one of the group who found the assassin Pausanias and killed him. There has been some speculation that Perdiccas might have been involved in the conspiracy to assassinate Philip.[4]

Perdiccas was present at the battle and destruction of Thebes in 335.[5] He had played a significant role in many of the early sieges and battles of the Persian campaign: Issus, Tyre, and Gaugemela. But he did not become a member of the Royal Bodyguards until 330, at about the same time as Ptolemy.

In fact, Perdiccas' career closely parallels that of Ptolemy. Perdiccas was not a member of the Royal Pages; nor did he, apparently, study with Aristotle at Mieza. But Perdiccas was a young aristocrat, like Ptolemy, who rose slowly but surely to the top. And, like Ptolemy too, he distinguished himself especially in India.

## BABYLON

None of these three "strongest" men was to create a stable dynasty. All three, in fact, were dead within four years of Alexander. Of the three generals who would, in one way or another, create lasting dynasties out of Alexander's empire, Antigonus the One-Eyed was in Asia Minor in his capacity as governor of Phrygia. Ptolemy and Seleucus were at Babylon.

From our perspective, the division of the empire seems inevitable. It cannot be overstressed that this solution was unthinkable to the leaders who gathered in Babylon around the corpse of Alexander the Great. Although the situation was unparalleled, what Alexander had conquered belonged to Macedonia, and Macedonia belonged to the Argead dynasty.

Although the kings' legitimacy had to be finalized by the approbation of the army, not just anyone was eligible. Greeks like Eumenes and Nearchus who had risen high in the ranks of Alexander's advisers could never dream of ruling over Macedonians. What must have been uppermost in the mind of everyone present at Babylon was that Roxane, Alexander' legitimate wife, was pregnant.[6]

When the Royal Bodyguards and chief officials had assembled in the royal tent, Perdiccas took off the ring that Alexander had worn as a symbol of his kingship and had only recently handed over to his subordinate.[7] Perdiccas then placed it on the throne, next to Alexander's crown and robe. Although this act was surely intended to demonstrate Perdiccas' humility, it also reminded everyone who needed reminding that Perdiccas was Alexander's hand-picked successor.

He spoke briefly, suggesting in only the vaguest possible terms that the army and the state needed a leader or leaders, and that the decision was up to the assembly.

Nearchus, Alexander's close friend and leading admiral, emphasized that only a member of the royal family should rule. But he reminded the assembly that Alexander already had a male heir and suggested the election of Heracles, the son

of Barsine, as king.[8] Since Nearchus was Greek, Heracles was illegitimate, and Barsine's daughter was Nearchus' wife, this proposal was not well received.

Ptolemy spoke next. He said that many Macedonians would be unhappy with any half-Persian king. He suggested that the inner core, presumably the Royal Bodyguards, form an advisory council and make decisions by a majority vote. This is the sort of practical, businesslike, realistic suggestion that we would expect from Ptolemy. It was, at the same time, a radical solution to the problem.[9]

Although Curtius reports that Ptolemy's proposal found favor with some,[10] it was far ahead of its time. The majority of the assembly was not willing to accept leadership outside the royal dynasty.

Meleager, the leader of the infantry, proposed Arrhidaeus, the son of Philip II and his third wife, Philinna. Arrhidaeus had two great advantages: he was fully grown, and he had no Persian blood. But there was one substantial disadvantage: he was mentally defective, presumably retarded, perhaps also epileptic. Even this might not seem to be a disadvantage to certain unscrupulous leaders who might want to be the power behind the throne.

Ptolemy, Perdiccas, and the other leaders of the cavalry were probably horrified by this suggestion. Arrhidaeus had survived various purges precisely because he did not constitute a serious threat. But one could not simply state publicly that the son of Philip II and thebrother of Alexander the Great was an idiot. Once Meleager had entered Arrhidaeus' name into consideration, it could not be ignored.

## THE SETTLEMENT

After much turmoil, the leaders at Babylon reached a compromise.[11] Perdiccas was chosen *chiliarch,* a position that made him second only to the kings. It had been decided that, if Roxane gave birth to a boy, as indeed she did, there would be a joint kingship. When this child was born he became Alexander IV. Perdiccas then held the real power over an infant and a mentally deficient adult, Arrhidaeus, now crowned as Philip III Arrhidaeus.

Meleager was chosen as Perdiccas' lieutenant, but Perdiccas soon had him executed. Meleager had threatened an insurrection of the infantry against the authority of Perdiccas and the cavalry. And the proud, arrogant Perdiccas was not a man to forget insubordination.

Antipater was to share his command of Europe with Craterus. Rather than choose between his two most powerful rivals, Perdiccas gave them more or less equal power.

Ptolemy was given exactly what he wanted: Egypt, Libya, and that part of Arabia that lies adjacent to Egypt. Cleomenes, the *de facto* satrap, was demoted to second-in-command. There is no indication that Ptolemy ever wanted more than to be satrap, later king, of a Greater Egypt. It seems unlikely that he was in a position to wrest control from Perdiccas at Babylon.

The rebellion of the infantry under Meleager meant that the inner core, the leaders of the Companion Cavalry, had to close ranks and band together. Ptolemy's

opposition to Perdiccas and his ideas on collegiate leadership got lost in the shuffle. The settlement at Babylon in 323 was a compromise between several competing factions,[12] but there can be little doubt that Perdiccas was the chief architect of the arrangement.

Antigonus the One-Eyed was confirmed in his position as governor of Greater Phrygia, Lydia, and Pamphylia: the lion's share of south-central Asia Minor. Eumenes, the wily and ambitious Greek, who had served as Alexander's chief secretary, was a loyal supporter of Perdiccas. He was given a large slice of eastern and northern Asia Minor which included Cappadocia, Paphlagonia, and the Black Sea coast. These regions bordered Antigonus' satrapy, but they had not yet been conquered. Antigonus the One-Eyed, among others, was instructed to aid Eumenes in the conquest.

Lysimachus became the governor of Thrace. Seleucus, the future dynast, accepted the command of the Companion Cavalry, the position that had been held first by Hephaestion and then by Perdiccas. A certain Arrhidaeus, not the king, was put in charge of Alexander's funeral.[13]

These arrangements were perfectly balanced to maximize Perdiccas' control of the empire. Whether intended or not, the settlement had created a system of antagonisms, which would seem to keep everyone else at each other's throats and to leave Perdiccas alone at the top.

First, Antipater and Craterus could be expected to contend with each other for control of Europe. Craterus had been sent to replace Antipater, if not actually to murder him. Antipater, who had been in control of Macedonia longer than many Argead kings, was of Philip II's generation and could not be expected to welcome the aid of a young man whose mission had been to unseat him.

Perdiccas must have thought that his two major adversaries would neutralize, if not destroy, each other in a long and bitter struggle for dominance. That did not happen. Antipater and Craterus joined forces, in mutual distrust of Perdiccas, and in order to put down the rebellion that erupted in Greece, climaxing in the Lamian War.

Similarly, Perdiccas could expect conflict between Eumenes and Antigonus the One-Eyed, another old-line Macedonian of Philip II's generation who distrusted foreigners in general and Greeks in particular. This time, the expectation was fulfilled, for eventually a long series of wars occurred between the two men. They were fought too late, however, to be of much benefit to Perdiccas.

Lysimachus, like Eumenes, was given a province that was not yet conquered. The conquest of Thrace could be expected to occupy him for some time.

And finally Perdiccas had set Ptolemy against Cleomenes. Although Ptolemy was closer to Alexander's generation than to Philip II's, he seems, in many ways, to have been an old-fashioned Macedonian. He never took to Persian ways and seems to have divorced his Persian wife, Artacama, shortly after Alexander's death. And, although he greatly admired Greek culture, he probably did so in the manner of the later Romans: admiring the culture, but not necessarily the people.

So when Ptolemy left Babylon for Egypt, he was surely well aware that, whatever else he had to deal with, he would have to contend with Cleomenes, the agent, if not the spy, of Perdiccas.

# 4
# PTOLEMY AS SATRAP

## PTOLEMY IN EGYPT

Ptolemy probably chose Egypt as his personal satrapy because of its enormous wealth. But what must he have thought of it when he came to live there for the rest of his life? The Greeks had been aware of the Egyptians for centuries. They were impressed with the country, its monuments, and its antiquity.

A century earlier Herodotus had written, at great length, about how everything in Egypt was opposite to the way it was in Greece. How women urinated standing up, for instance, and men sitting down.[1] Although Herodotus swallowed a lot of tall tales about flying snakes and fabulous creatures like the phoenix, if anything he minimized the differences. He saw only the superficial customs as strange. And he went to great lengths to identify the Greek gods with the Egyptian. Egypt was, in many ways, as foreign to the Greeks as any society could be.

As the Greeks were addicted to change and novelty, the Egyptians thought only in terms of continuity. The Greeks, even the Macedonians, emphasized freedom and autonomy. The Egyptians lived in a rigid, changeless class system. The lower classes looked to the priesthood and the bureaucracy for guidance. The bureaucracy and the priesthood were dependent on the pharaoh, who was literally a god on earth.

But even the pharaoh was dependent on time, custom, precedent, and the will of heaven. The pharaoh's duty was to preserve *maat* or "right order." The Egyptians had never had a Plato or an Aristotle. They could not understand the longing for a perfect political entity or the striving toward some teleological completion.

The Greek ideas of assembly and the rights of the citizen, likewise, were incomprehensible to the Egyptians. The Egyptians did not have a constitution in the Greek sense of the word. There was either *maat* or chaos. There was either order or there was not.

The Egyptians saw the afterlife as a continuation, if not an improvement, of life in this world. It was central to their culture. The Greeks, those that still believed in the old religion, seldom looked for happiness after death. Probably not even

those who had experienced the comforts of the Eleusinian or other Mysteries saw death as an improvement of their present state.

The Egyptian gods were much stranger and more foreign than Herodotus imagined. He, like many other Greeks, identified Osiris with Dionysus.[2] This association is, although misleading, understandable and more convincing than that of Hathor with Aphrodite, for instance, or of Anubis with Hermes. Osiris, at least, had human features, even if his skin color was normally depicted as green. He was the mythical pharaoh of Egypt.

Osiris had been torn apart by his evil brother Seth.[3] Seth took the various parts of Osiris and buried them all over Egypt. Isis, the sister-wife of Osiris, with the help of Anubis, the jackal-headed god of embalmment, found all the parts, put them back together, and brought Osiris to life again. From that point on, Osiris chose to rule in the land of the dead and leave the land of the living to Horus, his son by Isis. Each successive pharaoh was Horus in life and became one with Osiris in death.

Dionysus, likewise, was torn asunder, reassembled and brought back to life. In the Greek myth, it is the Titans who ripped Dionysus apart and Athena who put him back together.

Both Osiris and Dionysus were gods of resurrection. Both too were gods of fertility and vegetation. The seed is placed in the ground, buried like a dead body, and then it revives, rises from the dead to new life.

But Osiris went on to become god and judge of the dead. Dionysus did not. Osiris, then, could also be compared to Hades. It is unlikely that the Greek cult of Dionysus had descended directly from the worship of the Egyptian god, but the similarities were intriguing.

## PTOLEMY IN MEMPHIS

Ptolemy appears to have gone first, not to Alexandria, but to Memphis. It was there that Ptolemy first brought the body of Alexander,[4] and it was there that Perdiccas attacked him in 320.[5] Lying near the juncture of the Delta and Upper Egypt and near the pyramids of Giza, Memphis, one of the oldest cities in the world, had been the capital of the Old Kingdom. More recently, it had been the Persian capital. Under the Ptolemies, it remained the country's second largest and second most important city.[6]

Ptolemy did not waste any time in dealing with Cleomenes. If we can believe our sources at all, Cleomenes, in amassing an enormous personal fortune, must have alienated virtually every segment of society.[7] He had cheated the soldiers out of a twelfth of their annual pay. He had extorted money from the priests by threatening to close their temples if they did not hand over huge installments of "protection" money.

The merchants of Egypt were not allowed to export grain to Greece during a major famine, until they had paid a heavy duty. Cleomenes then taxed the

merchants on top of these exorbitant duties. Generally, he robbed, cheated, and extorted from everyone, and created a personal fortune at Egypt's expense.

When Ptolemy had him executed, there were probably few objections locally, but it was an act designed to worsen relations with Perdiccas. Perdiccas had expected Cleomenes to be his secret agent against Ptolemy. Nonetheless, it was hardly the sort of thing that Perdiccas could complain about publicly.

Ptolemy did not, however, give the money that Cleomenes had taken back to the people. It became the basis of his own personal fortune. This was an effective way to begin his reign. Ptolemy, with one gesture, was able to amass a fortune and make himself popular by executing a hated, tyrannical administrator. At the same time, he sent notice to Perdiccas that he, Ptolemy, alone was in charge of Egypt.

## THE CULT OF SARAPIS AND ISIS

It was possibly during his stay in Memphis that Ptolemy conceived the idea of the cult of Sarapis and Isis. This was one of his most brilliant, effective, and lasting innovations. Was it strictly a cynical move to push Egyptian propaganda throughout the Mediterranean, or is it possible that Ptolemy experienced some sort of genuine conversion?

The sources on the origins of this cult are unusually baffling, but the dominant theory is that it derived from the worship of Apis, whose center was in Memphis. When Apis, the sacred bull, died, he became associated with Osiris as Osor-Hapi or Sarapis in Greek. This may explain the name, but the deified bull of Memphis is a long way from the Ptolemaic cult of Sarapis.

Tacitus and Plutarch tell essentially the same story.[8] In it, Ptolemy dreams of a handsome young man (actually, a god) who bids the satrap bring his image to Egypt. Ptolemy (in Tacitus) consults one Timotheus of Athens, a member of the Eumolpid family, one of the priestly clans associated with the Eleusinian Mysteries. Ptolemy had brought him to Egypt to supervise rituals.

Timotheus tells him of a temple of Pluto (Hades, also called Jupiter Dis in Latin) in the city of Sinope on the Black Sea. There is a statue of the god in the temple, next to one of Persephone. Ptolemy, busy with other matters, forgets the whole affair until the god returns to him in a dream, this time threatening him that, if he does not act, his kingdom will not prosper.

Ptolemy sends representatives to Sinope with instructions to stop by Delphi on the way. The representatives are told by Apollo's oracle to bring the statue of the god back to Egypt, but to leave Persephone alone. The king of the region was reluctant to part with the statue. After three years of delay, the god, weary of waiting, boards the Egyptian ship of his own accord. Ptolemy's ambassadors bring the statue back, and it becomes the center of an enormous temple of Sarapis, a Sarapeum, in the Rhacotis quarter of Alexandria. According to another story, reported by Tacitus, Sarapis originated in Memphis.[9]

What conclusions can we draw from this material? It seems likely that Ptolemy both sought much outside help in developing this cult and that he allowed the idea to simmer for several years before he presented it to the public. In addition to Timotheus, who brought with him the rich traditions of the Eleusinian Mysteries, Ptolemy hired the services of the native Egyptian priest, Manetho.[10] Manetho, whose later chronicle of Egypt is an indispensable resource on the history of his country, was clearly a very knowledgeable man on native lore.

The use of these two particular men suggests that Ptolemy was searching for a religious cult that would appeal to both Greeks and Egyptians. He was probably influenced by Alexander's attention to Zeus-Ammon, and perhaps for the same reason. Ptolemy may have anticipated that someday he would be king and not satrap. As Zeus-Ammon had bestowed divine status on Alexander, Sarapis might someday do the same for Ptolemy.

There is every reason to believe that the Egyptians would accept a foreign god along with their new foreign ruler. They would recognize Osiris in Sarapis. Ptolemy had a statue made of Sarapis by the sculptor Bryaxis, which shows the characteristics of Zeus and Hades. The Greeks would find this image easier to worship than a god with green skin.

But if this cult was created, cynically, for purposes of policy and if the dream that Tacitus reports is strictly Ptolemaic propaganda, why Sinope? If Ptolemy chose to unite his people by the introduction of a Greco—Egyptian god, why would he choose a cultural backwater on the Black Sea as the god's place of origin? This is the one part of the story that seems totally illogical. The suggestion has sometimes been made that the cult may have something to do with the Sinopian district of Memphis.[11] This explanation would make more sense, and it would also conform to Tacitus' alternative version. No one seems to want to push this theory too far, however, since both Plutarch and Tacitus clearly specify the Sinope on the Black Sea.

This question has bothered me more than any other problem in the writing of this book. It occurred to me that this circumstantial piece of evidence might hide some kernel of truth, and that Ptolemy's conversion might be genuine. But after much reflection and discussion of the problem with my colleagues, I have concluded that this scenario is doubtful. Ptolemy was not a likely candidate for religious mysticism.

The fact that Timotheus was on hand in Egypt before the dream implies that Ptolemy was already interested in ritual. Perhaps the priest influenced the satrap in his choice of a distant and exotic cult which was then developed, with help from the native Manetho, into something acceptable to both Greeks and Egyptians.

But one cannot just invent a new god. Ptolemy and Timotheus perhaps chose Sinope because it was remote and obscure. They could imply that Sarapis had been worshiped for centuries, and who would know the difference?

Professor Peter Green has been most helpful. In a personal letter, he responded to my question:

> Hence Sinope: suitably distant, very much Greek dominated, yet in immediate contact with a wild part of the hinterland of Asia Minor where exotic deities flourished in abundance. What Ptolemy wanted was a free hand, especially since, unimaginatively, he was putting his deity together (as a forger might) from various existing models—including, of course, the indigenous Osiris—Apis tradition.

Another intriguing part of the story is Delphi's injunction to leave Persephone behind in Sinope. Tacitus calls her "his sister,"[12] which is odd, since Demeter, not Persephone, would be Hades' sister. But, whatever the meaning, Sarapis is free to take Isis as his sister-wife.

Isis did not need to be significantly Hellenized. Although, in some early Ptolemaic iconography, she looks more Greek than Egyptian, there is little in the original Isis that would be repellent to Greeks. She is all-woman. She is mother, maiden, whore and virgin, wife and mother, all-knowing and all-forgiving. She is Athena, Hera, Artemis, Demeter, Aphrodite, Persephone, and Hecate.[13]

She became all things to all men, and her worship spread all around the Mediterranean. Five centuries later Isis remained the primary competitor to Christianity for the minds and souls of the men and women of the Roman empire. She, not Sarapis, became the principal center of interest. But it was within the context of this new Ptolemaic cult that Isis was translated from an Egyptian goddess to a universal religion.

## EXPANSION

Ptolemy lost no time in enlarging his sphere of influence. There is no evidence that he ever sought to claim Alexander's empire as a whole. On the contrary, he seems to have been the first of the Successors to have realized that the future lay with the development of smaller kingdoms.

Ptolemy had chosen not only the richest of Alexander's provinces, but perhaps the most self-contained. Geography had cut Egypt off from the rest of the world and allowed it to flourish in splendor and in isolation for centuries at a time. Inhospitable deserts protected the country to the east and to the west; the cataracts of the Nile discouraged invasions from the south.

Ptolemy continued work on the creation of his new capital city, the city which had been planned by Alexander and begun by the now-deceased Cleomenes. But as he did so, he must have realized that Alexandria was vulnerable to attack from the sea. Perhaps that is why he first went to Memphis and carried Alexander's body there as well.

If Alexandria was to be his capital Ptolemy needed friends and allies in the eastern Mediterranean. He quickly made alliances with the kings of Cyprus.[14] Kingship had existed in Cyprus since Mycenaean times, but, more recently, the city-states of Cyprus had not been free. With only short interruptions, the island

had been under Persian domination for two centuries. The Cypriots had welcomed Alexander with open arms and aided him in his siege of Tyre in 333.

By 321 Ptolemy had made treaties with the various rulers and brought the island into his sphere of influence. It was probably at thistime that his daughter by Thais, Eirene, married Eunostus of Soli, one of the nine kings of Cyprus.[15] Ptolemy would lose Cyprus to Demetrius Poliorcetes in 306 but recover it by 295. After 295 the island was to remain under Ptolemaic domination down to the Roman conquest in 50 BC.

Having secured Cyprus to his east, Ptolemy was handed an opportunity to control Cyrenaica, his nearest neighbor to the west. Cyrene, in eastern Libya, was a prosperous Greek colony whose trade and whose history had been linked more to the Aegean than to Africa. It was not a monarchy like the Cypriot cities. At the time it submitted to Alexander, it was a constitutional state in which the oligarchs wrestled with the democrats for control.

An unusual set of circumstances had embittered relations between Cyrene's competing parties and turned normal political wrangling into active civil war.[16] Before Alexander's death, Harpalus, Ptolemy's old friend from the days when both had studied under Aristotle, had absconded with a fortune which he had extorted from the treasury, and fled to the island of Crete. There he had been killed by one of his subordinates, Thibron, a Spartan soldier of fortune.

A group of exiled democrats had requested Thibron to aid them in regaining control of Cyrene. Thibron agreed, apparently with the intention of making himself the ruler of Cyrenaica. After losing several battles to Thibron, the aristocrats of Cyrene sent to Ptolemy for aid.

Ptolemy sent Ophellas, a Macedonian general, at the head of both land and naval forces. Ophellas defeated Thibron, captured him, and turned the territory over to Ptolemy.

Ptolemy created a constitution for the Cyrenaeans which gave them the illusion of freedom, although clearly he retained control over them.[17] The constitution established a moderate oligarchy with a citizen body of ten thousand. Ptolemy was appointed general for life and had the right to choose citizens as well as members of the Council of Elders.

The constitution does not mention that Ptolemy apparently left Ophellas behind with a large garrison to maintain domination over the country.[18] Cyrene rebelled several times, but, with only slight lapses, it remained in Ptolemaic hands until Rome annexed it in 96 BC.

## THE KING'S BODY

Ptolemy captured the body of Alexander the Great and took it to Egypt in 322 BC. He kept it first at Memphis, while he prepared a magnificent tomb for it in Alexandria. Arrhidaeus, not the king but the man chosen by the Successors for the job, had spent two years in Babylon preparing the body and the vehicle which would carry it home.

Several of our ancient sources say that Alexander's body was to be buried at the Siwah shrine of Zeus-Ammon in Libya,[19] but this is surely wrong. The tomb of Alexander would become an attraction for pilgrims and tourists and one of the wonders of the world. Even if Alexander had wished to be buried in Libya, which is highly dubious, his Successors would not have allowed it.

The tough-minded generals who were in charge of Alexander's legend as well as his empire would never have agreed to banish his body to a remote and obscure post accessible only to Ptolemy.[20] If they were willing to dismiss Alexander's last plans without serious debate,[21] they would not give in to such an eccentric whim as burying their king in Libya.

Pausanias preserves the most likely scenario.[22] The generals had decided to send Alexander's corpse to Aegae (modern Vergina, where five tombs have been discovered since 1977), the traditional burialground of Macedonian kings. That is why Ptolemy met the funeral cortège in Syria with an army.[23] Ptolemy had probably bribed Arrhidaeus, the man in charge of Alexander's funeral. At any rate, Ptolemy had little trouble capturing the body and carrying it to Egypt, even though Perdiccas sent troops to prevent the interception.[24]

Ptolemy built a magnificent shrine for Alexander in his new capital. It became the burial-site for the Ptolemies as well, and a part of the palace-complex. It was probably located near the Museum and near the heart of Alexandria, where the Canopic Way crossed the Street of the Soma.

The sources sometimes call the Mausoleum *soma* (body) and sometimes *sema* (tomb). But, by whatever name, it became Alexandria's chief attraction: a focus of curiosity, awe, and pilgrimage. Not even Augustus, after subduing and succeeding the Ptolemaic dynasty, could resist a peek at the remains of the great Alexander.[25]

# 5
# THE WAR WITH PERDICCAS

## A REALIGNMENT OF THE SUCCESSORS

Perdiccas could not attack Ptolemy publicly for killing Cleomenes, his agent and probable spy, but nor could he not ignore the theft of Alexander's body. It was a direct affront to his leadership. The conflict between Perdiccas and Ptolemy was more than a local event. It was part of a general disruption of the balance of power, created in Babylon three years earlier.

This Perdiccan War is often seen as a war of the local dynasts against the central authority.[1] In one sense this is an accurate description of the situation. However, Perdiccas, more than the dynasts, seems to have been the one bringing events to a head.

Perdiccas had at first aligned himself with Antipater, by offering to marry his daughter, Nicaea. Then he changed his mind and proposed marriage to Cleopatra, the sister of Alexander. This was a deliberately provocative act, which alienated Antipater and put everyone on guard, since it could easily be interpreted as a step toward the assumption of the royal prerogative.

Antigonus, refusing to help Eumenes conquer his province, fled to Europe. So Perdiccas, still stationed in Asia, faced a formidable coalition in the west. Antipater, Lysimachus, Craterus, and Antigonus were all aligned against him. Why Perdiccas would choose to take on such a coalition and to invade Egypt at the same time is difficult to understand, but he apparently had the greatest possible confidence in his ally, Eumenes.

This confidence was not misplaced, for Eumenes proved himself to be more than capable in his capacity as general. In a major battle, Eumenes defeated an army under the command of Craterus, who himself died in the combat.

## THE INVASION OF EGYPT

Perdiccas advanced on Egypt in ignorance of Eumenes' victory.[2] He camped near Pelusium, on the eastern border of the Nile delta. Perdiccas tried to open up an old canal on the Nile, but his project went awry, and some of his soldiers began to desert. It appears as if Ptolemy had spies or sympathizers in Perdiccas' army,[3]

for there was a steady drain of soldiers deserting to the service of the Egyptian satrap during this campaign. Throughout his long career, Ptolemy often diluted the strength of his opponents by bribing the soldiers, most of whom were mercenaries, or by simply offering them higher wages. He turned one of the weaknesses of the era, the heavy reliance upon mercenaries, into a strength, and this technique was successful against Antigonus the One-Eyed in 306 as it was now against Perdiccas.

Ptolemy welcomed the newcomers with open arms, winning for himself a reputation as a generous and fair-minded commander at the same time as Perdiccas' reputation for arrogance was making him more and more unpopular.[4]

Perdiccas had brought an enormous army with him, including infantry, cavalry, and elephants. He also brought the two kings: the infant Alexander IV, and the retarded Philip III Arrhidaeus, who had recently married the ambitious and independent-minded Eurydice. Perdiccas moved the entire camp at top speed, travelling throughout the night, to a new location on the Nile, known as the Fort of Camels. This was one of the many spots all over Egypt that Ptolemy had garrisoned.

Perdiccas began to send his army across the Nile at dawn. The elephants led the way, followed by shield-bearers and ladder-carriers. Perdiccas' speed and secrecy had not given his attack the element of surprise he had intended. Ptolemy, perhaps warned by agents in Perdiccas' camp, arrived on the scene quickly and led his men into the fort before the enemy arrived. The small garrison in the fort was substantially augmented, although the Egyptians were still considerably outnumbered.

Ptolemy had probably not seen combat since the Indian campaign six years earlier. Although a professional soldier, Ptolemy as satrap, and later as king, was remarkable among the Successors in his restrained use of military action. But in this war, he clearly outmaneuvered Perdiccas at every turn. Perdiccas was considered one of the best generals in an age of great generals, but Ptolemy's cunning and the peculiarities of the Egyptian landscape turned Perdiccas' invasion into a total failure.

Ptolemy showed courage, leadership, and generosity which won him popularity with his own troops and admiration from the enemy. He put himself at considerable personal risk, placing himself at the forefront of the fort's defenders. Standing at the outermost rampart, he thrust his long spear into the eyes of the first elephant, blinding him. He killed the elephant's driver and fought off the soldiers who were scaling the walls with ladders.

Ptolemy's men were fired by their leader's courage and fought a long, hard battle. The lead elephant, having been blinded, was rendered useless, and Ptolemy's men killed the second driver as well. Perdiccas had lost the advantage of surprise, and he could not use his elephants to batter down the walls. Even though he had a much larger army, his siege had turned into a costly failure.

He gave up the siege at the end of the day and led his men back to camp. Trying once again to gain the advantage through surprise, he commanded an all-night

march south toward Memphis. Perdiccas wished to cross the river in secret and attack Ptolemy, whose headquarters were still apparently located in the ancient capital. This time the Nile alone proved to be a sufficient enemy.

Perdiccas ordered men to cross over to an island in the river. The water was deep and the current strong, but most of the first contingent of soldiers made it to the island. In order to try and make the crossing easier, Perdiccas stationed the elephants upstream to block off the river and horsemen downstream to catch the men caught in the current.

This plan backfired, for the motion of the animals apparently set the river floor into turmoil. The next group of men who tried to cross, dressed in heavy armor, found themselves in over their heads and drowned.

Perdiccas realized his mistake and ordered the men on the island to come back. The best swimmers in the group and those intelligent enough to throw away most of their equipment made it back to the shore. Many drowned. Others were swept downstream where they were either taken prisoner by Ptolemy's men or eaten by crocodiles.

Perdiccas had begun three operations in Egypt, all of which had met with disaster. Over two thousand men had been sacrificed, and nothing had been accomplished,

Ptolemy had gathered the bodies of those who had been washed ashore, cremated them, and sent their ashes to their friends andrelatives. The Egyptian satrap was as good at public relations as he was a military strategist.

The general dissatisfaction with Perdiccas erupted into violence, and a group of conspirators, led by the commander Pithon, broke into the general's tent and stabbed him to death. It has been suggested that Ptolemy was behind this conspiracy to assassinate Perdiccas.[5] Although there is no evidence for this, it is entirely possible. However, there would seem to have been sufficient hostility toward Perdiccas without Ptolemy having to finance his murder.

The Egyptian satrap appeared before the enemy army the next day and supplied them with food. He defended himself to his fellow Macedonians, and his words were so well received that the army was willing to raise Ptolemy to Perdiccas' post as head of the central government.

## TRIPARADISUS

Ptolemy refused the offer of the Macedonian army to make him the guardian of the kings and *de facto* head of the government of the empire. This may be the single most important fact of his career. Surely the offer must have been tempting. Ptolemy was offered a prize that many were to live and die for.

There is every reason to believe that he was not biding his time for a better offer. This was as good an opportunity as he was ever likely to get. He had already made up his mind to stay in Egypt.

The supreme command went to Arrhidaeus, the man who had allowed Ptolemy to capture the body of Alexander, and Pithon, the leader of the conspiracy against

Perdiccas. This arrangement was temporary.[6] It was only meant to last until a general conference could be called, one that would include Antipater and Antigonus.

This conference took place at Triparadisus in upper Syria. Ptolemy did not even attend. Arrhidaeus and Pithon gave over their command to Antipater. Antipater was not received with great enthusiasm, however. The army, stirred up by Eurydice, the wife of King Philip, demanded back pay. Antipater, a major revolt on his hands, was rescued by Antigonus and Seleucus.[7]

A new settlement was made as soon as peace was restored. Ptolemy, not surprisingly, was confirmed in his satrapy. His occupation of Libya was officially sanctioned, and he was given a free hand to conquer as much African land west of Libya as he wished. Seleucus received Babylonia, this marking the beginning of the long and successful Seleucid dynasty.[8]

Antigonus was, however, the big winner at Triparadisus. In addition to maintaining his Asian satrapy, he was given the remnants of Perdiccas' army, the guardianship of the kings, and the command of the war against Eumenes.



1 Ptolemy I Soter. Silver tetradrachm minted at Alexandria *c.* 305–300 BC. The diadem indicates a period after Ptolemy's assumption of kingship.



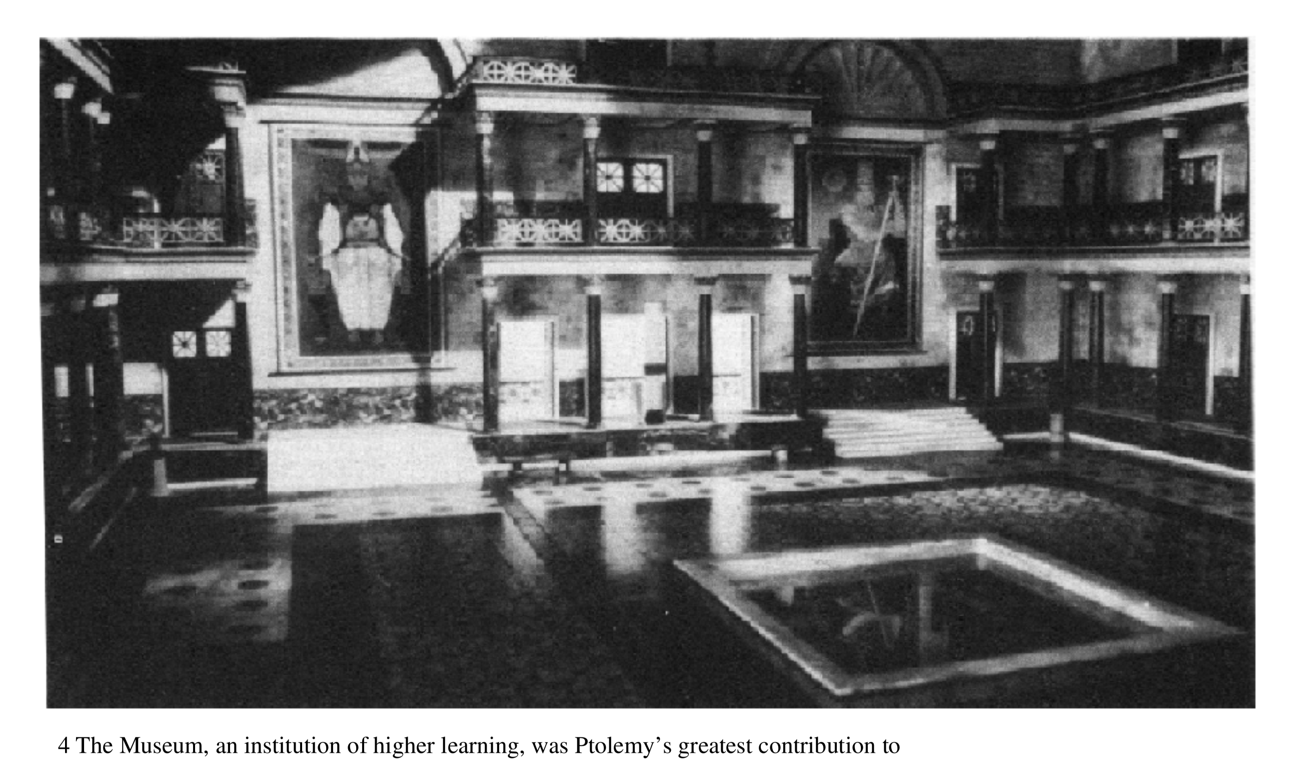
2 Demetrius Poliorcetes (The Besieger), horned and wearing a diadem. Silver tetradrachm minted at Amphipolis 290/89 BC.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of the British Museum.



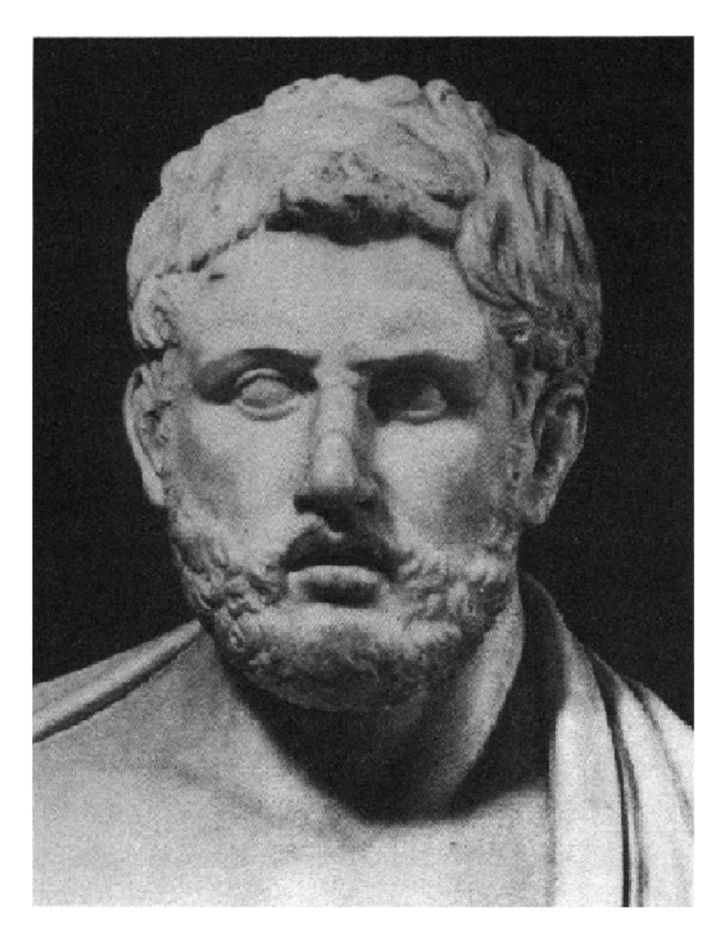
3 One of the most charismatic figures of his day, Demetrius Poliorcetes defeated Ptolemy off the coast of Cyprus in 306 BC and struck this coin to celebrate his victory. The obverse shows Nike trumpeting Demetrius' victory from the prow of a ship. The reverse shows a heroic Poseidon, giving battle with his trident.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of the British Museum.



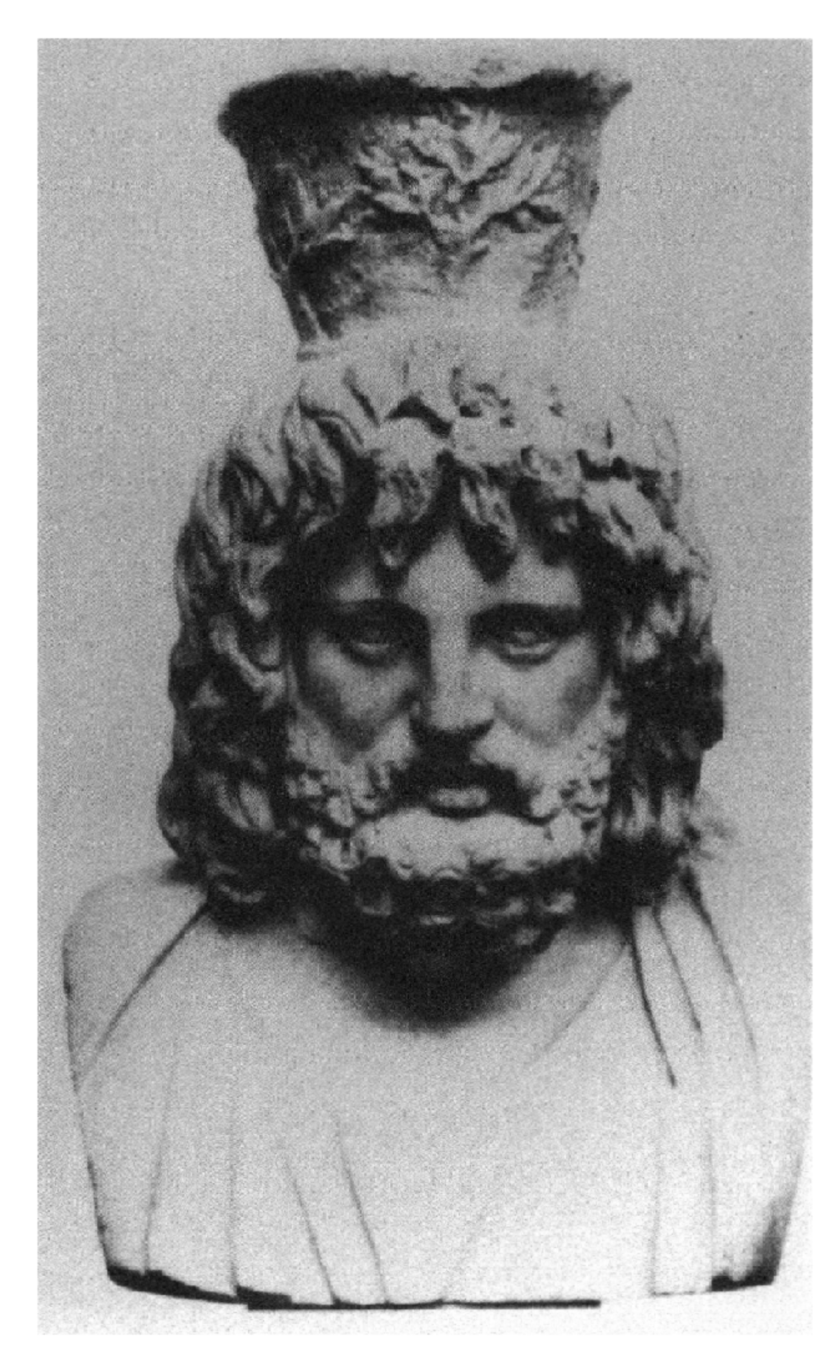
4 The Museum, an institution of higher learning, was Ptolemy's greatest contribution to the world. Magnificent achievements in science, scholarship, and literature were made here This is an imaginative re-creation of the Great Hall of the library.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of Carl Sagan and Carl Sagan Productions Inc.



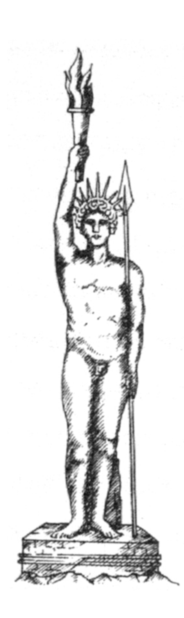
5 Demetrius of Phaleron was a philosopher and a statesman. He dominated Athens for a decade but left in 307 BC after Poliorcetes came to power. He became Ptolemy's friend and advisor and one of the chief influences on the Museum.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of the Museo Archeologico, Florence.



6 A Roman bust, perhaps a copy of Bryaxis' original statue of Sarapis. The new god looks like a combination of Pluto and Zeus.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of the British Museum.



7–8 The Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was create out of material left behind after the unsuccessful siege of Demetrius Poliorcetes. The Rhodians celebrated their deliverance by building this great statue of the sun god Helios. The drawing on the left represents a possible reconstruction of the Colossus, standing wit legs together and holding aloft a torch. On the right is a sixteenth-century engraving by Maerten van Heemskerck, showing the Colossus bestriding the harbour entrance at Rhodes.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of Peter A.Clayton.







9 A portrait of Sarapis, Ptolemy's Greco— Egyptian god, who was, perhaps, a patron deity of the Museum.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of Carl Sagan and Carl Sagan Productions Inc.

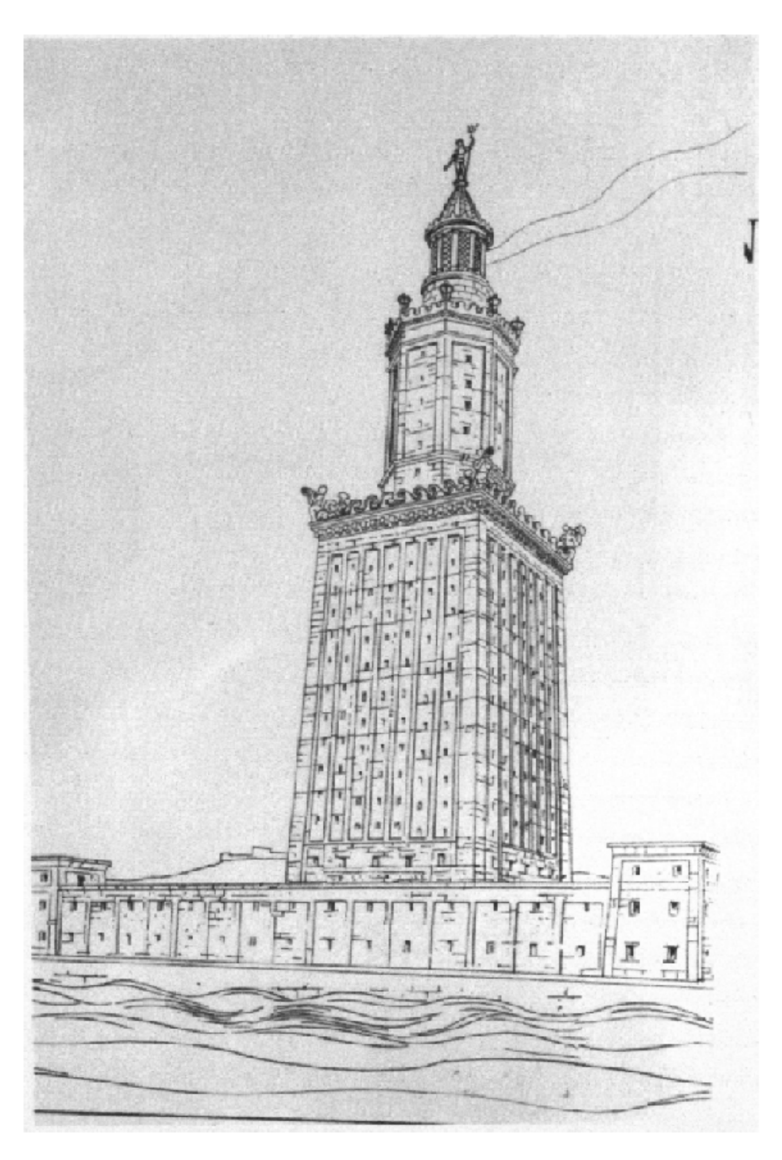
10 Alexander the Great, another of Ptolemy's patron deities, shown here with all the trappings of a pharaoh.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of Carl Sagan and Carl Sagan Productions Inc.



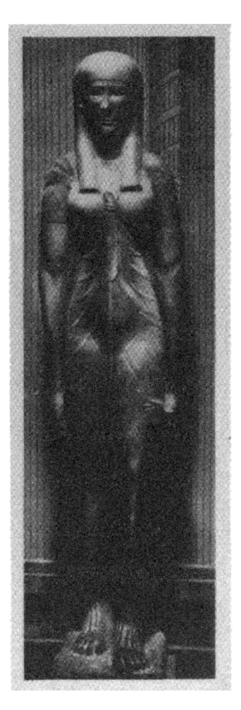

11 The books of the Museum's library were in the form of papyrus rolls. Each roll contained approximately one book of a modern classical text.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of Carl Sagan and Carl Sagan Productions Inc.

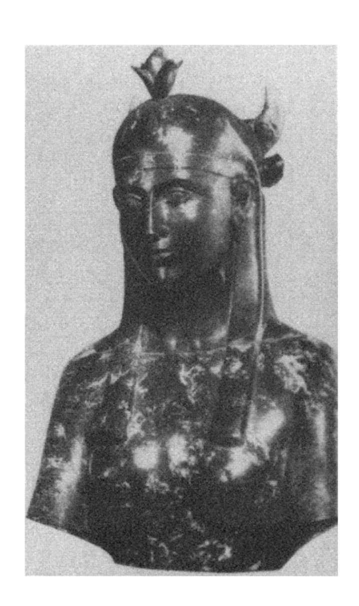


12 The Pharos Lighthouse at Alexandria was begun by Ptolemy I and completed during the reign of his successor. The architect was Sostratus of Cnidus. It was built in three storeys, surmounted by a statue of Zeus Soter. The lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, survived until the fourteenth century AD.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of Peter A.Clayton.



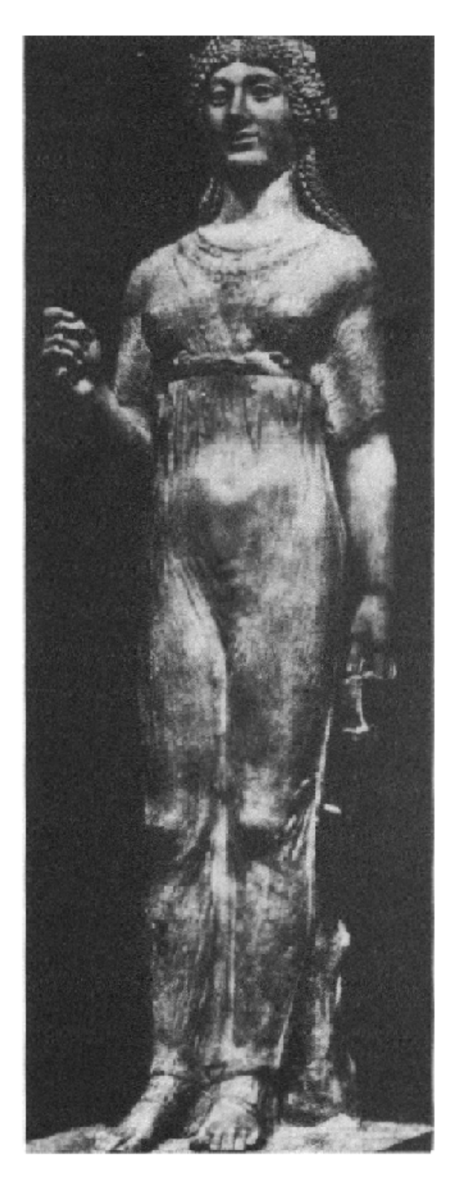
13–14 As time went on, Isis regained more of her Egyptian qualities. Notice the traditional knot between the breasts of the statue on the left. This was a symbol of Isis dating back to her earliest pharaonic iconography.



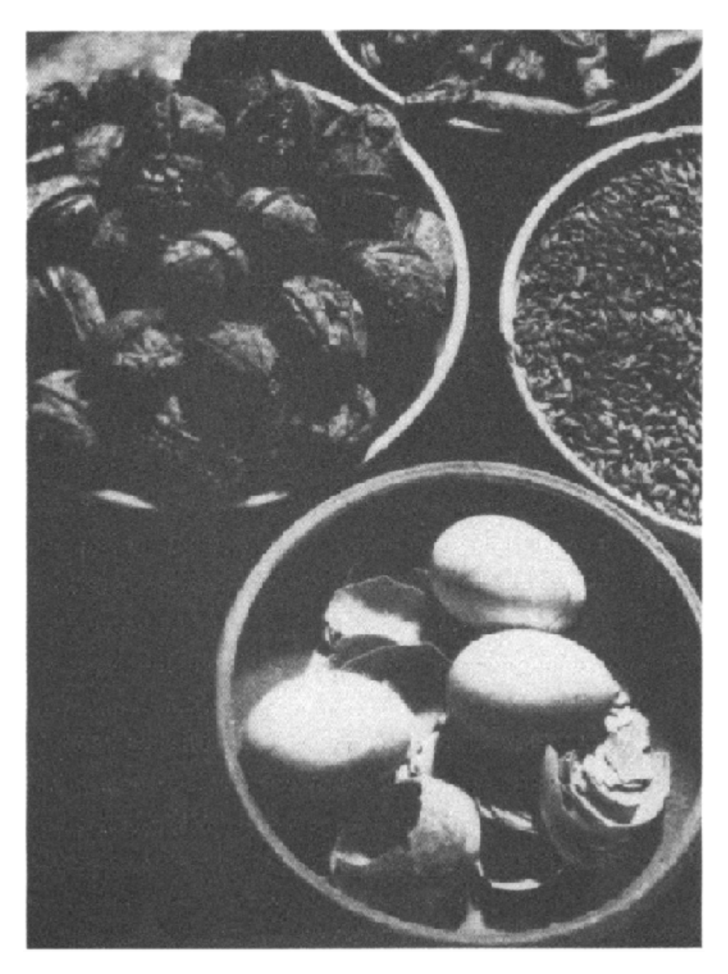


15–16 The Hellenistic cult at first, portrayed Isis as a Greek woman. Only the sistrum in her right hand is typically Egyptian. The statue on the right is holding wheat instead of the sistrum.

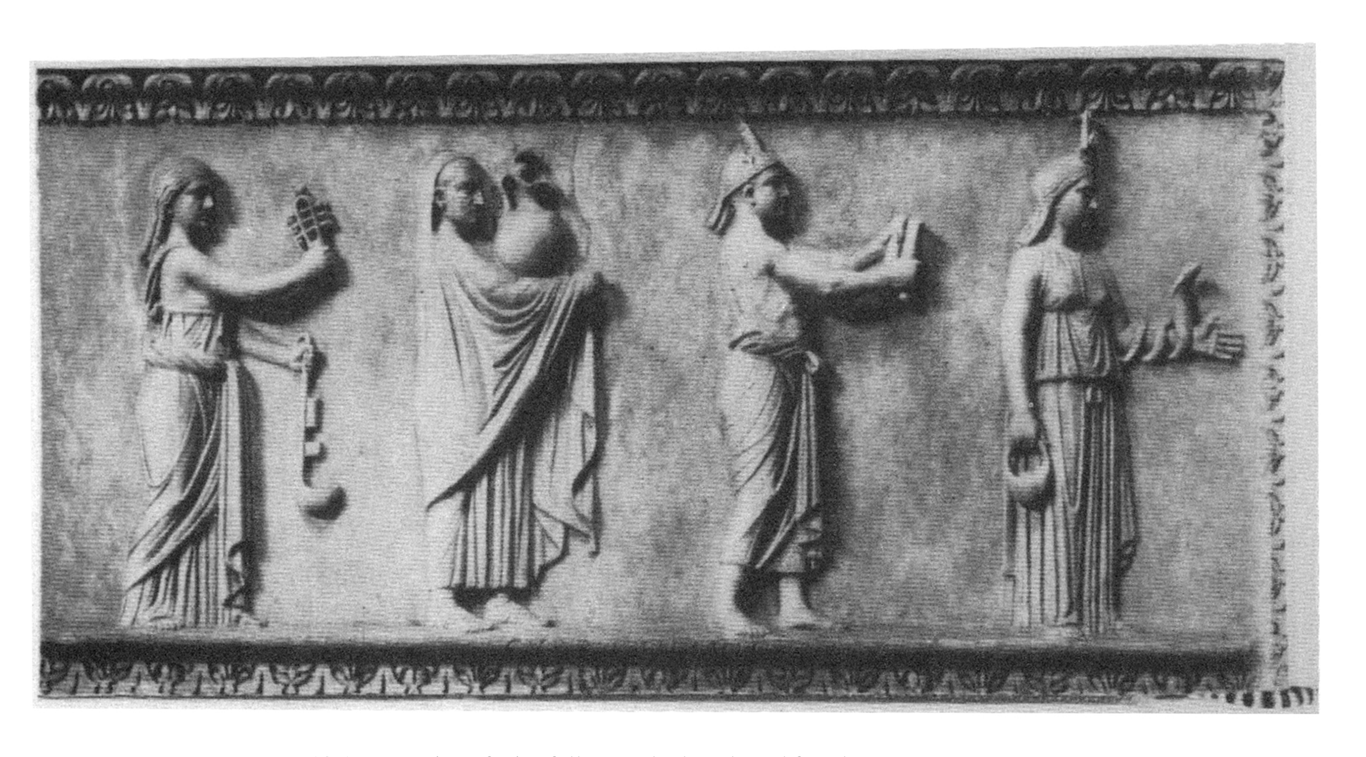




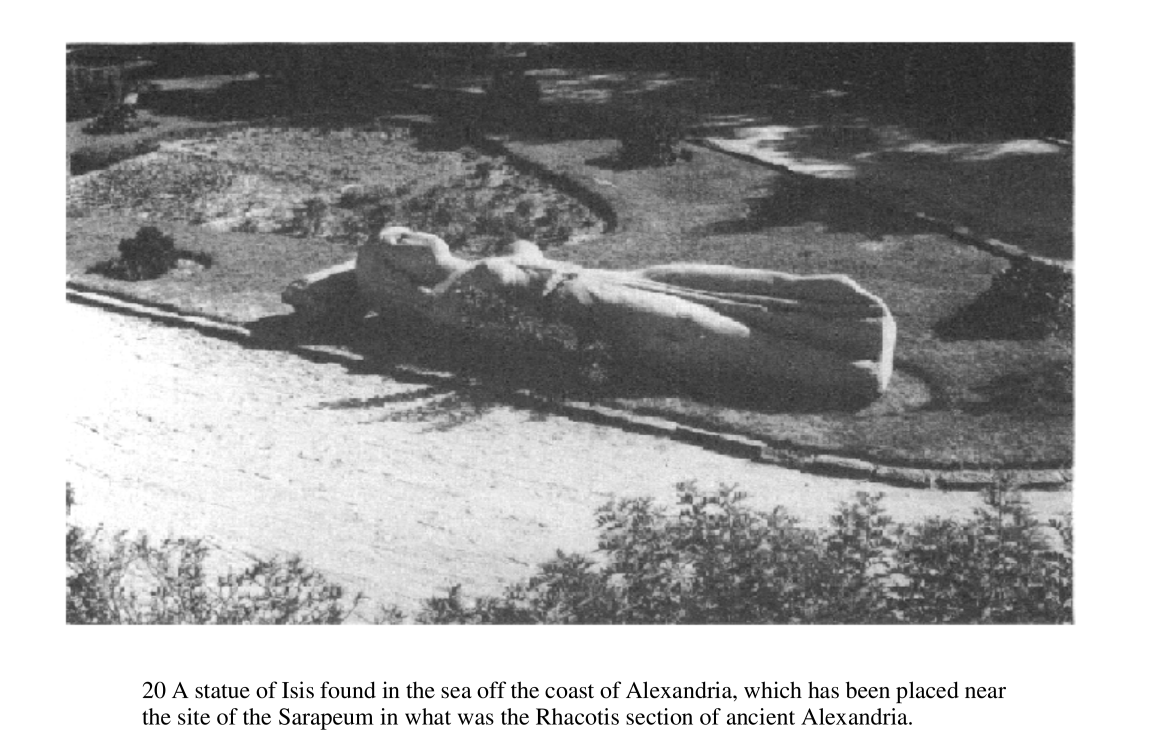
17 A female worshiper of Isis.



18 The remains of a meal found in a temple of Isis at Pompeii.

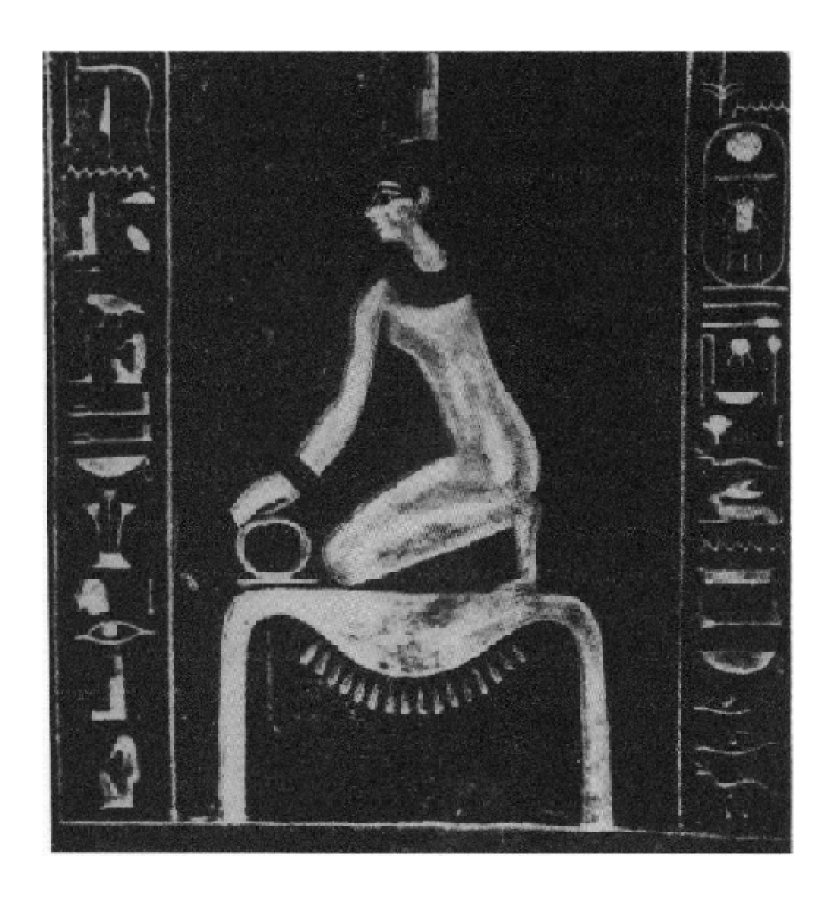


19 A procession of Isiac followers, both male and female.



20 A statue of Isis found in the sea off the coast of Alexandria, which has been placed near the site of the Sarapeum in what was the Rhacotis section of ancient Alexandria.

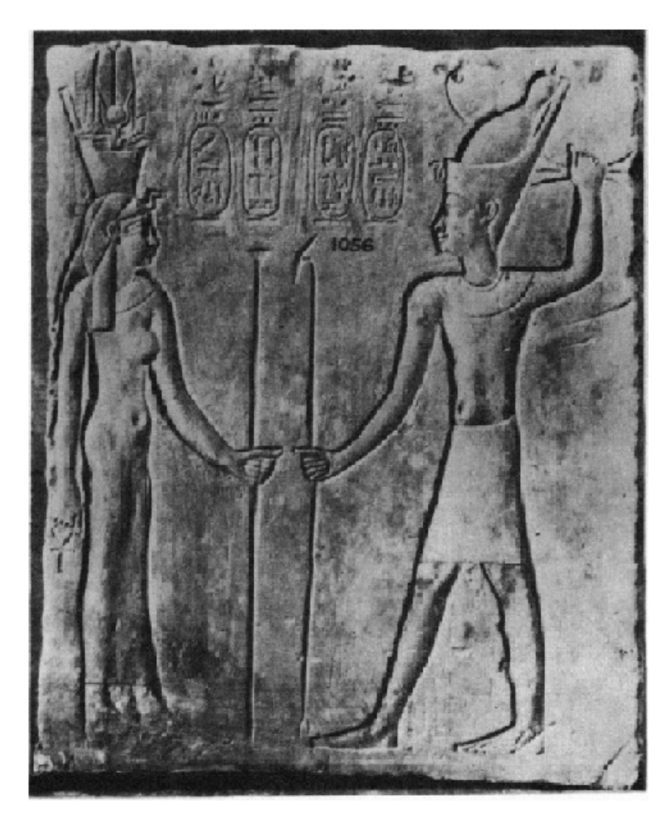
*Source:* Reproduced by permission of Peter A.Clayton.



21–23 As part of the cult of Sarapis and Isis, Isis was transformed from an Egyptian to a Hellenistic goddess. She is seen here in her Egyptian form, her Hellenistic form, and as a mother. It was as the latter, prefiguring the Virgin Mary, that she was most appealing.








24 The children of Ptolemy and Berenice—Ptolemy II and Arsinoe—brother and sister and husband and wife. Ptolemy II is represented as a Pharaoh, wearing the traditional crown of Lower and Upper Egypt. Arsinoe is portrayed as a goddess with an ankh in her right hand and a crown on top of her vulture headdress. This sculpted block from the Egyptian city of Tanis is now in the British Museum.

*Source:* Reproduced by permission of the British Museum.

# 6
# THE WAR WITH ANTIGONUS

## THE DEATH OF ANTIPATER

It probably did not take Ptolemy long to figure out that Antigonus the One-Eyed had inherited more than Perdiccas' army. He had inherited his legacy as well. Antigonus was now the man who was in the best position to claim the central government, to make a bid to control the empire as a whole.

Ptolemy was not to come into direct conflict with Antigonus for five more years. Five years of relative peace was an eternity in this period of constant turmoil. Ptolemy had time to expand his empire and build his capital, Alexandria, into one of the world's greatest cities.

Antigonus the One-Eyed had no such luxury. He spent most of his time in pursuit of the wily and resourceful Eumenes.

Ptolemy was intelligent enough to realize that he could not survive in total isolation from the other Successors. The man who appeared to be the most useful possible ally at this time was Antipater.

Ptolemy appears to have courted Antipater and sought an alliance with him from the beginning. He married Antipater's daughter, Eurydice.[1] We do not know exactly when this marriage took place, but it was probably just before or shortly after the assembly at Triparadisus.[2] Eurydice brought with her her niece (or cousin[3]) Berenice, who was to feature very prominently in Ptolemy's life.

Ptolemy and Eurydice had at least four children: two sons, including Ptolemy called Keraunus, and two daughters, Ptolemais and Lysandra.[4] Ptolemais would eventually become the wife of Demetrius Poliorcetes.[5]

Phoenicia and Syria were essential to Egypt's defense. Ptolemy wanted to protect himself from possible attack from the east by Antigonus the One-Eyed or anyone else who might appear on his border. He tried to bribe the satrap Laomedon into giving him Phoenicia and Syria.[6] Laomedon refused, and so Ptolemy sent a small force under Nicanor. In a brief and economical campaign, Laomedon was imprisoned, and his satrapy was brought under Egyptian control.[7]

It is likely that Ptolemy had secured Antipater's permission before he began this campaign. The alliance between these two men might have been the basis for a certain amount of stability in this violent period, but it was not to be. Antipater

died in 319. On his deathbed he chose Polyperchon, an admired and trusted general, as his successor. This was galling to Antipater's son Cassander, who immediately began a campaign to unseat Polyperchon and take the place of his father as *epimeletes* or regent.

Ptolemy sided with Cassander as the most likely and able (not to mention ruthless) successor to Antipater's position. But the conflict between Cassander and Polyperchon was to make an already violent and confused situation worse.

Polyperchon, desperate for allies, made an arrangement with Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great. Olympias, determined to make certain of her grandchild's claim to the throne, had Philip III Arrhidaeus put to death and forced the suicide of his ambitious bride, Eurydice.

King Alexander IV and his mother Roxane came under Cassander's "protection." He kept them as virtual prisoners for years, before he eventually had them murdered in 310.

By 315 Cassander had defeated Polyperchon, and Antigonus the One-Eyed had captured and executed Eumenes. This meant that still another realignment of the Successors, another coalition, and another war were about to take place.

## PTOLEMY MARRIES BERENICE

In 317 Ptolemy married Berenice, who had come to Egypt with Eurydice. It is not certain whether he first divorced Eurydice, but it would appear that he did not. Polygamy was not unusual among the Macedonian kings and was an accepted practice among the Successors as well.[8] Berenice was a widow. She had been previously married to an otherwise obscure Macedonian named Philip.[9]

She had two children by her first husband, a daughter named Antigone and a son named Magas.[10] When Pyrrhus went to Alexandria in 298, he was so impressed with Berenice, or so Plutarch tells us, that he asked for permission to marry her daughter Antigone.[11] Pyrrhus was also certainly influenced by such other, mundaneconsiderations as an alliance with the house of Ptolemy. Magas became the governor of Cyrene and led an unsuccessful revolt against his half-brother, the second Ptolemy.

Ptolemy and Berenice had several children, including the heir Ptolemy II and Arsinoe, who would marry her brother in the Egyptian manner and so inspire his surname of Philadelphus (sister-lover). Berenice had a temple dedicated in her honor and two cities named after her: one on the Red Sea and the other in Epirus, a creation of her son-in-law, Pyrrhus.[13]

## THE COALITION AGAINST ANTIGONUS

After defeating Eumenes, Antigonus the One-Eyed began killing or removing some of the more established satraps in Asia. Seleucus fled to Ptolemy in Egypt and convinced him, if convincing was necessary, that Antigonus had to be stopped. A coalition was formed that included Lysimachus of Thrace and Cassander. As

Antigonus the One-Eyed descended on Syria, he was met with envoys from the coalition demanding that he restore Seleucus to Babylonia, hand Hellespontine Phrygia over to Lysimachus, and leave Ptolemy in charge of Syria.[14]

Antigonus the One-Eyed refused the terms and launched an ambitious war of propaganda. He attacked Cassander as the murderer of Alexander's mother and incarcerator of Alexander's wife and child. He called upon Cassander to tear down Cassandreia, a city which the latter had built, and Thebes, which he had rebuilt, after Alexander himself had ordered it destroyed. But Antigonus' master-stroke was to call for the freedom and autonomy of all Greek cities.[15]

Ptolemy soon issued a similar statement. All the Successors wished to earn the goodwill of the Greeks. Ptolemy, who often garrisoned cities and supported monarchies and oligarchies, seems an unlikely champion of Greek freedom and autonomy. Antigonus the One-Eyed, who often supported democracies, has sometimes been taken more seriously, but clearly his primary motive was to undermine Cassander's position on the Greek mainland.[16]

The war dragged on from 315 to 311 without any decisive outcome. Ptolemy had a better navy than Antigonus, and so Antigonus avoided sea battles. Antigonus had a superior army, and so Ptolemy avoided land battles. Antigonus captured Joppa and Gaza without too much difficulty, but he became bogged down in a siege of Tyre that lasted fifteen months.

There was much intrigue on the islands of Cyprus and Rhodes, where Antigonus sought to gain concessions and improve his navy.There was a major battle by land and sea in which Ptolemy's commander, Polyclitus, defeated two of Antigonus' generals. This gain was vitiated, however, by a revolt in Cyrene.

Seleucus finally persuaded Ptolemy to take decisive action against Antigonus the One-Eyed at Gaza.[17] This battle marked the entrance on the stage of history of one of the era's most charismatic figures. Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, the future "Poliorcetes" or "Besieger of Cities," had fought by his father's side against Eumenes, but now he had an important independent task.

Still in his early twenties, he was put in charge of protecting his father's recent conquests in Syria and Palestine. Antigonus the One-Eyed had left seasoned generals, Nearchus and Pithon, both veterans of Alexander's campaigns, behind to advise Demetrius.[18] Apparently they advised him not to fight Ptolemy.[19]

The ambitious young man did not listen. Demetrius, like Perdiccas before him, had hoped that his elephants would overwhelm the Egyptian army. And, like Perdiccas too, he was disappointed. Ptolemy and Seleucus set up spikes on chains to stop the elephants and ordered their archers and javelin-throwers to concentrate on the beasts and their drivers.

Ptolemy's victory over Demetrius at the Battle of Gaza in 312 led to his reoccupation of Syria and Palestine. It was probably at this time that Ptolemy encouraged Jews to settle in Alexandria.[20] The consequences of this event were, of course, enormous, far beyond anything Ptolemy could have envisioned. The Jews of Alexandria would eventually translate their Bible into Greek. This

translation was called the Septuagint, because it was supposed to have been the work of seventy men.

Despite recent efforts to minimize the effects of Hellenization,[21] that there were eventually more Jews in Alexandria than in Jerusalem is a fact. That more Jews spoke Greek than Hebrew or Aramaic is a fact. That the Jews became part of the melting-pot of Alexandria, that they both influenced and were influenced by Greco-Roman Egypt for a thousand years, are facts of great importance.

The unexpected results of Ptolemy's recapture of Palestine may have been enormous, but his hold on the region was tenuous. Antigonus the One-Eyed came to the rescue of his son Demetrius. Ptolemy, as usual, decided that discretion was the better part of valor and beat a hasty retreat.

But again this seemingly insignificant action had far-flung implications. The one military result of the Battle of Gaza was that Seleucus got to go back to his Babylonian satrapy, this time for good. And when Antigonus the One-Eyed was finally defeated at the Battle of Ipsus in 301, Seleucus would inherit much of his territory. The Ptolemys claimed Palestine, but their hold on the region was never secure. The Seleucids placed their capital in northern Syria, but the southern region of Coele Syria was bitterly disputed.

The irony of the Battle of Gaza was that when the sons of Ptolemy went on periodic campaigns to regain or enlarge their Palestinian territory, they were fighting not the sons of Antigonus, but the sons of Seleucus. Ptolemy had reinstated the chief future rival of his own dynasty.

The whole area of Syria and Palestine remained one of the major unsettled frontiers of the Hellenistic period. Just as Egyptians, Babylonians, Hittites, and Assyrians had fought over this land since the dawn of history, Palestine and Syria would remain a bloody and violent battlefield from Ptolemy's time down to our own.

## THE ASSUMPTION OF KINGSHIP

Ptolemy and Antigonus the One-Eyed made peace. This treaty, however, like the Peace of Nicias a century earlier, was hardly definitive. It was little more than a truce in a war that would continue for another decade. Seleucus and Antigonus, in fact, never stopped fighting.

Cassander and Lysimachus did sign the treaty, which was essentially a ratification of the *status quo*. The treaty upheld Cassander as "general of Europe" until Alexander IV should come of age.[22] It was only one year later that Cassander made certain that Alexander would never come of age, having both the young prince and his mother put to death. The extinction of the Argead dynasty profoundly changed the face of Hellenistic politics. The idea of a single empire died a slow death.

There was apparently a scramble among the Successors to win the hand of Cleopatra, the sister of Alexander the Great. There is some evidence to suggest that Ptolemy was on the verge of succeeding in his marriage proposal in 308, when

Antigonus the One-Eyed had Cleopatra killed.[23] Ptolemy's wife Berenice had only recently (*c.* 309) given birth to his heir, Ptolemy II. The satrap may still have been married to Eurydice and involved in some way with Thais. That he was still able to make Cleopatra an offer of marriage leaves little doubt as to the polygamous nature of his household.

Ptolemy went to Greece at about this time. He took control of the island of Andros and of the cities of Corinth and Sicyon.[24] This uncharacteristic aggression, along with his engagement to Cleopatra, have led some historians to believe that Ptolemy was contemplating a bid for absolute power at this time.[25] If so, it was a short-lived aberration from Ptolemy's consistently modest claims as satrap of Egypt.

But satrap for whom? The term satrap implied that a man was governor of a province in the name of some higher authority. Just who that authority was now, after the extinction of the royal line, was no longer clear. Eventually, all the Successors would adopt the title of king. But what did that title signify?[26] Did king mean successor to Alexander and all that he had conquered, or did it mean king of new separatist countries created from the old provinces?

Antigonus the One-Eyed and his son Demetrius Poliorcetes were the first to assume the title of king, and clearly they meant the former. Antigonus meant to create a dynasty that would succeed the Argead dynasty as kings of all that Macedonia had conquered.

Ptolemy, Cassander, Lysimachus, and Seleucus all began to style themselves kings. It is possible that not even they were clear as to what the implications of that title were. Cassander, more than the other three, since he was ruthlessly ambitious and since he was in control of Macedonia itself, would likely, given the chance, eventually make a bid for supreme rule. He did not, in fact, find the opportunity in the short decade remaining to him to make that attempt. He surely harbored the ambition.

But nothing was certain at this point. All the Successors had been promising their support for the Argead dynasty for so long that any sudden shift in allegiance would have seemed both unpatriotic and confusing. As if participants in some giant poker game, the Successors held their cards close, eyed each other suspiciously, and waited for someone to make the first play.

They did not have to wait long. Whatever confusion and ambiguity clouded the scene, one fact was certain. Antigonus the One-Eyed had the credentials and the clout to make a bid for supremacy. The other Successors would have to bury their mutual suspicion long enough to deal with their common enemy.

So what was Ptolemy doing in Greece in 308 and 307? Diodorus says that he was trying to win the goodwill of the Greeks.[27] Most of the Successors, no matter where their central location, did try to retain some influence on the Greek mainland. Putting a garrison in their cities may not have won Ptolemy enormous goodwill in Corinth and Sicyon, but it did give him bargaining chips in the great international scramble for power that was already under way.

Ptolemy renewed his alliance with Cassander, and stayed on the mainland long enough to enjoy himself. It may have been his first trip home in twenty-six years. There is no evidence that Ptolemy had been back to Europe since he left with Alexander at the beginning of the latter's campaigns in 334. He probably witnessed the victory of Lagus, his son by Thais, in the chariot races of Arcadia in 308/307.[28]

## THE WAR CONTINUES

Ptolemy was not the only one fishing in Greek waters in 308 and 307. Demetrius Poliorcetes had become the principal agent of his father now, since Antigonus the One-Eyed was well into his seventies. Demetrius had instructions to take charge of as many Greek cities as he could.

Father and son agreed that Athens should be their highest priority. As Demetrius sailed into port, the Athenians thought it was Ptolemy who had come.[29] They were totally unprepared for combat, and so Demetrius was able to take the city without much effort.

The man who had dominated Athens for a decade was another Demetrius, Demetrius of Phaleron. Demetrius of Phaleron was Cassander's puppet, but he was not the typical oppressive and tyrannical oligarch. He dyed his hair, wore facial makeup, and was extremely fond of elegant banquets and women.[30] Still in his early forties, he was also a formidable intellectual, philosopher and writer, and a product of Aristotle's Lyceum.

Demetrius of Phaleron was forced to flee to Thebes, but eventually he found his way to Alexandria. As a fellow Aristotelian and conservative, Ptolemy found him quite congenial. Demetrius of Phaleron became an important adviser to Ptolemy and probably one of the chief intellectual influences on the creation of the Museum.

The influence of Aristotle and the Lyceum on the Museum is unmistakable.[31] Ptolemy's youthful studies with Aristotle at Mieza were not entirely lost. Demetrius of Phaleron made an important contribution to the intellectual history of Alexandria and the world. He was not, however, the first librarian, as is sometimes asserted. That honor went to Zenodotus of Ephesus.[32] Demetrius of Phaleron outlived Ptolemy I, ran into trouble with his successor, Ptolemy II, and died in Egypt about 280.[33]

Meanwhile, the other Demetrius, Poliorcetes, had taken full possession of Athens and called for a reinstatement of the democracy. He was granted divinity and spent the winter in an orgy of mutual admiration with the Athenians.

In the spring of 306 Demetrius Poliorcetes set out against Ptolemy. He tried to enlist Rhodes in his service. The Rhodians, who were allied to Antigonus among others, were leaning more toward Ptolemy and refused to cooperate.[34]

Poliorcetes' primary target was Cyprus. He fought a short battle near the city of Salamis on Cyprus. Menelaus, Ptolemy's brother and the leader of his forces on the island, lost the battle and retreated into the city. Demetrius besieged Salamis

in the first of several such maneuvers which would eventually earn him his famous nickname, Poliorcetes ("the Besieger").

Ptolemy led a fleet to his brother's rescue but, in a humiliating naval encounter, suffered the most crushing defeat of his career. As a result, he lost control of Cyprus for over a decade.

It was on the occasion of Demetrius' victory over Ptolemy off Salamis in 306 that Antigonus the One-Eyed and his son took the title of king. Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Seleucus soon followed suit.[35] Cassander, perhaps because the native Macedonians were more sensitive to the issue, waited slightly longer.[36]

Antigonus the One-Eyed and his son now made a concerted effort to invade Egypt. Demetrius led the navy, and the 76-year-old Antigonus led the land forces. But this invasion proved no more successful than previous ones against Ptolemy. Demetrius' fleet ran into a violent storm, and Antigonus' army proved as inadequate against the Egyptian terrain as had earlier attempts.

## RHODES

The most famous siege in ancient history began the next year. The island of Rhodes had consolidated into a single political entity. It was poised on the eve of its greatest era: a period of wealth, prosperity, and artistic achievement which would make the small island the rival of the much larger Hellenistic Successor states.

Earlier in their history, the Rhodians had been held back by disunity and a period of Persian domination. After their liberation by Alexander, they sought independence. They had treaties with Antigonus and other Successors, but they leaned toward Ptolemy for mainly commercial reasons.[37] The Rhodians were merchants, and business was good in Egypt. They were willing to go to great lengths to avoid conflict. Rhodes was interested in commerce, not war.

At any rate, Demetrius made unreasonable demands on the island. He asked for a hundred hostages from the richest classes and that his fleet have free and open access to their harbors.[38]

The Rhodians continued to make efforts to avoid war, but Demetrius seemed to be intent upon it. More than any other of his sieges, it is surely this one that earned him the title Poliorcetes. It is ironic then that, in spite of his enormous resources, his extraordinary war machines, his intelligence, and his persistence for the better part of a year, Demetrius was unable to capture the city.

Ptolemy especially, but also Cassander and Lysimachus, sent aid, chiefly food, to the Rhodians.[39] Demetrius finally gave up and concluded a compromise whereby the Rhodians promised to be allies with the Antigonids but stipulated that they would not go to war against Ptolemy.[40]

The Rhodians sold the war towers and machines which had been abandoned by Demetrius and erected the huge statue of Helios the sun god, that wonder of the world known as the Colossus of Rhodes. They also had statues made of Cassander and Lysimachus and sent to them to thank them for their contributions.

The people of Rhodes wanted to honor Ptolemy in a special way, so they sent to Zeus-Ammon in Libya to ask whether they could offer the new king divine honors. The oracle answered in the affirmative. The people of Rhodes built a new shrine in their city and named it the Ptolemaeion. They also bestowed on Ptolemy his surname of Soter (Savior).[41]

Historians have sometimes rejected this story, for two reasons. First, it appears only in Pausanias, not in any of the major sources such as Diodorus. Second, it seems odd to some that Ptolemy received his surname, an aspect of his coronation and deification, a name in which he was later worshiped, not from Egypt, but from a foreign people.[42]

There is, however, no good reason to reject this information. Neither Plutarch nor Diodorus is a source from which we can expect inclusion of every detail. Second, there is no other convincing context from which Ptolemy might have received such a title as "Savior." Maybe he was awarded the title after he "freed" Egypt from Cleomenes, or Perdiccas, or Antigonus, but no ancient source even hints at such a scenario. Pausanias specifically says that Ptolemy received the surname Soter from the Rhodians.

This title, his divine honors, and his assumption of kingship may all be tied together. Diodorus tells us that Ptolemy received divine honors from the Rhodians. Pausanias says that he received his surname from the same source. He probably accepted the title of king only shortly before this.[43]

Since the meaning of kingship in the post-Argead period is, at best, unclear, it may have seemed necessary to bolster the title with claims of divinity. Alexander sought confirmation of his divine status at Siwah in the Libyan Desert. Antigonus the One-Eyed had received divine honors from the city of Scepsis in the Troad.[44] Antigonus and his son Demetrius were proclaimed both kings and gods by the Athenians.[45] There was a popular theory at the time that the gods were men who had been kings before they were deified.[46]

There are precedents, then, for receiving both titles and divinity from foreign states. It may even have been thought politic to do so, as, later, Augustus allowed himself to be worshiped in the provinces but not in Rome itself.[47] If the titles and the divine honors were acceptable in the provinces, then maybe they would be acceptable at home. The Hellenistic kings did bring it home. Augustus did not, although apparently later Roman emperors such as Caligula toyed with the idea.

It is highly unlikely that the cautious and practical Ptolemy ever thought of himself as a god. It is likely, however, that he saw divinity as an effective bolster to his dubious title of king. His Egyptian subjects, used to a pharaoh-god, would have less difficulty with the concept than Greeks and Persians, both of whom seemed willing to accept it. Perhaps hyperbole was an understandable result of an age of uncertainty.

Ptolemy had more to worry about than what the title king meant and who would accept it. He had more concrete concerns than these. Egypt had already been invaded twice since he had been in charge. There was every reason to believe that it would happen again and soon.

## IPSUS

This long and rambling war was finally coming to a head, although its outcome must have seemed far from certain. Antigonus and Demetrius had taken Syria and Cyprus away from Ptolemy, but they had lost Rhodes and had not been able to take Egypt itself. When Demetrius left Rhodes, he returned to the Greek mainland, where, in his absence, Cassander had been busy making trouble.

Demetrius drove Cassander back to Macedonia and put together an impressive league of Greek states to support the Antigonid cause. Cassander, rightly concluding that this league was aimed against him, tried to make a deal with Antigonus the One-Eyed. Antigonus, according to Diodorus,[48] said that he would negotiate with Cassander only after Cassander had relinquished all the land he controled.

Cassander promptly renewed his alliance with Lysimachus and Seleucus. The plan was to draw Demetrius back to Asia and force the Antigonids into a defensive position. The 80-year-old Antigonus accepted the challenge.

The resulting battle of Ipsus has been called the "Battle of Kings." On the one side were Lysimachus, and Seleucus with his son and heir Antiochus. Cassander sent some of his men to Ipsus, but stayed behind to take advantage of Demetrius' absence. On the other side were Antigonus the One-Eyed, Demetrius Poliorcetes, and young Pyrrhus, the on-again, off-again king of Epirus.

Ptolemy was conspicuous by his absence. Ptolemy was a definite part of the coalition that had formed to oppose the Antigonids, but he stayed behind to take advantage of the situation by reclaiming Palestine and Coele Syria. The Battle of Ipsus is rightly seen as a watershed event. It did not end fighting among the Successors, but it did create a new *status quo* and a new balance of power that would remain in essence until the Roman conquest.

Antigonus died in the battle. Antigonid claims did not. Demetrius miraculously survived and lived to rebuild and reconquer. The Antigonid claims, however, ultimately centered on Macedonia itself. Antigonus II, Demetrius' son, inherited the kingdom of Cassander, not his grandfather's far-flung holdings or his father's ceaseless ambition.

Ptolemy and Seleucus would argue over the spoils even before the dust settled from Ipsus. Seleucus claimed Syria, including that part which Ptolemy had conquered. Ptolemy objected, claiming to have taken part in the war against Antigonus. Seleucus taunted Ptolemy for not showing up at Ipsus, but for friendship's sake would not, for the moment, insist on control of Coele Syria.[49]

This seems a rather high-handed attitude from Seleucus, considering that it was Ptolemy who restored him to his Babylonian satrapy, and that Seleucus had been the big winner in the aftermath of Ipsus, inheriting the lion's share of Antigonid holdings. In fact, there was every reason to believe that Seleucus would inherit the Antigonid ambitions as well.

# 7
# PTOLEMY THE KING

## BUSINESS AS USUAL

Seleucus was now in the same position as that of Perdiccas in 323 or Antigonus the One-Eyed in 321. The details of the settlement after Ipsus and, indeed, for much of the Hellenistic period are few and vague for us, since Diodorus, our major source, exists from this point on only in fragments. Diodorus' connected narrative, in fact, ends even before the Battle of Ipsus in 301.

It is certain, however, that Seleucus came to control a vast amount of Alexander's Persian conquests: Syria, much of Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Armenia, and large portions of Iran and Afghanistan.[1] Already before the Battle of Ipsus, he had given up on the Indian provinces and made a treaty with that country's new king, Chandragupta.[2]

It also seems certain that Ptolemy viewed Seleucus as a threat and reacted accordingly. He made matrimonial alliances with Lysimachus of Thrace. Lysimachus' son Agathocles married Lysandra, the daughter of Ptolemy and Eurydice.[3] Lysimachus, himself, at the age of about 60, married Arsinoe, who could hardly have been more than about 16.[4]

Seleucus must have been alarmed by these arrangements. Ptolemy, Cassander, and Lysimachus were now closely aligned. Casting around for support, Seleucus came up with a surprising choice. Demetrius Poliorcetes was still in possession of Cyprus, Tyre, Sidon, and remnants of a navy, but in the aftermath of Ipsus he would not have seemed a likely candidate for a serious comeback. But Seleucus, for lack of a better choice or because he saw the potential, embraced the son of the dead and defeated Antigonus.

In the sort of about-face that, by this time, had become commonplace, the two former enemies were reconciled. Seleucus married Demetrius' daughter Stratonice, even though he was still married to his Persian wife, Apame.[5]

It would seem that war-weariness would have overtaken the Macedonian Successors long before, but then war was their profession. Ptolemy alone among his contemporaries was eager and determined to pursue the arts of civilization. However, there seems to have been a serious attempt at peace among the major dynasts at this point.

Seleucus, having raised Demetrius back up to the level of the other Hellenistic leaders, sought to reconcile him with Ptolemy. Demetrius married Ptolemais, a daughter of Ptolemy and Eurydice. At this juncture, Poliorcetes probably had no idea where he was going next, but he was carefully looking for any promising opportunity. Perhaps the most significant outcome of this attempt arose from an unlikely source. Demetrius sent his young companion, Pyrrhus, the exiled king of Epirus, as a hostage to Egypt to show his good faith.

Ptolemy and Pyrrhus became friends. Pyrrhus apparently admired Berenice as well, and he married her daughter, Antigone. After the death of Cassander in 297, Ptolemy financed Pyrrhus' reconquest of Epirus. Could Ptolemy have foreseen that Demetrius Poliorcetes would eventually gain control of Macedonia? Or that Pyrrhus, as king of Epirus, could be a valuable ally and an important counterweight to Demetrius?

Who could expect that any king of Epirus would be a significant factor in the power-politics of Greece? W.W.Tarn, in the *Cambridge Ancient History,* reminds us that the "effective history of Epirus begins and almost ends with Pyrrhus…who for a time forced his backward country into prominence at the expense of its future."[6]

Ptolemy was no prophet, but he must have seen something in the young man. He must have thought it worthwhile to support and finance his successful return to Epirus.

## ALEXANDRIA

Alexandria lay on a diagonal between the Mediterranean to the north and west, and Lake Mareotis to the south and east. The city lay to the west, by about sixteen miles, of the Canopic mouth of the Nile, to which it was eventually connected by a canal, and northwest of Naucratis, which had been the chief trading center for Greeks in Egypt. It incorporated the small fishing village of Rhacotis, which became the southwestern district of the city in which the Great Temple of Sarapis was later erected. It is also the part of the city where "Pompey's Pillar," the column that is actually dedicated to the Emperor Diocletian, can still be found today.

The oblong island of Pharos lay close to the shore. The city was connected to the island by the Heptastadion, a mole of seven stades, as its name implies, or about seven-eighths of a mile. The "Letter of Aristeas" mentions Demetrius of Phaleron as crossing the Heptastadion. Since Demetrius did not outlive him by much, it is probable that the first Ptolemy is the one who built the Heptastadion. The area has silted up since ancient times, so that there is no longer a distinction between the island and the mainland.

The Heptastadion created two harbors: the Great Harbor to its east and the Eunostos ("Happy Return") on the west. The eastern end of Pharos, on which the lighthouse was to be built, lay closer to the mainland and so created a better-protected harbor.[7]

The city was laid out on a grid pattern. The streets were serviceable for horses and chariots as well as pedestrians.[8] The two major streets intersected at right-angles. The latitudinal Street of the Sema (or Soma) crossed the Canopic Street in the center of the city, near the Mausoleum of Alexander. The Canopic Street ran from the Gate of the Sun in the east to the Gate of the Moon in the west.[9]

The existence of gates implies a wall. Both Arrian and Diodorus tell us that Alexander laid out the plan for the city walls, but Tacitus states that it was Ptolemy who built them, along with cults and shrines.[10] Strabo does not mention the walls, and there is no ancient description. In the first of his *Iambi,* Callimachus, the great Alexandrian poet of the third century, calls on the scholars of the city to assemble at the shrine outside the walls.

## THE MUSEUM AND ITS LIBRARY

The royal palaces in the northeastern sector of Alexandria covered a fourth or more of the city, and this region was later called the Brucheion.[11] Little is known of the style or extent of the buildings. It is entirely possible that the palace-complex included the Mausoleum as well as the Museum and its library. Strabo places the Museum within the palaces.[12] It had a public walk, a dining-hall, and lecture-rooms. The members shared communal property, and their leader was a priest chosen by Ptolemy.[13]

We do not know when Ptolemy moved his capital from Memphis to Alexandria.[14] It may have been about the time he declared himself a king. It probably was earlier, but surely he had moved to Alexandria by 297. The satrap stele places the event in 313. Although this source is not impeccable, 313 is a reasonably close guess.

Ptolemy had written to Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor as head of the Lyceum, trying to lure him to Alexandria.[15] Theophrastus declined but suggested Demetrius of Phaleron.[16] The death of Cassander, Demetrius' protector, in 297 made the offer irresistible to the exiled oligarch.[17]

Ptolemy and Demetrius began planning in earnest early in the third century. Ptolemy provided Demetrius with considerable funds to start collecting books for the Museum's library.[18] Aristotle's Lyceum had possessed a large library, but Ptolemy's Museum was to outshine its predecessor considerably. The Ptolemys became so obsessed with books that, it is said, they confiscated all the volumes coming into the city, kept the originals, and gave the copies to the initial owners.[19]

Another anecdote says that one of the Ptolemys had to put up the enormous collateral of fifteen talents in order to borrow the official edition of the Attic tragedies: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. After having them copied, the king decided that he could not part with the originals. He simply sent the Athenians the copies and forfeited the fortune he had given to them as a deposit.[20]

These anecdotes may be exaggerated, but it is beyond question that the Ptolemys built the most extensive library in the ancient world. There may have been

something close to 500,000 volumes, a volume being a papyrus roll corresponding roughly to a "book" in a modern edition of a classical text.[21]

There was more than one library in Alexandria. The Sarapeum also had a library. It would be interesting to know what, if anything, was the relationship of the new cult of Sarapis to the Museum and its library. The Museum was, as its name implies, a temple to the Muses, the Greek goddesses of science, literature, music, and art. The head of the Museum was a priest.

Demetrius of Phaleron, we are told, became a devotee of Sarapis. He lost his eyesight but recovered it, perhaps through the ritual of incubation, sleeping overnight in the Sarapeum.[22] He wrote a number of poems in the god's honor.

We know that there was a second library in the Sarapeum.[23] It was called the daughter library; the one in the Museum, the mother. There is no evidence to suggest that the books of the daughter library were solely about Sarapis or about religion.[24]

It is possible that, in addition to the Greek muses, Ptolemy wished to associate his Museum and its library with his god Sarapis, the god whowould unite Greeks and Egyptians. Demetrius of Phaleron, a philosopher and a sophisticated intellectual, seems an unlikely convert to a newly created, popular religion. Perhaps Ptolemy "suggested" that Demetrius, the chief intellectual founder of the Museum, convert to the worship of one of the institution's inspirational deities.

There is hardly enough evidence to warrant urging this suggestion strongly. But the Museum, like the cult of Sarapis, was a jewel in Ptolemy's crown, a beacon to advertise the wealth and importance of his new state. It was a piece of merchandizing, designed to win him approbation with the Greeks and with his fellow Macedonian Successors. Just as the enlightened despots of the eighteenth century built schools and roads and touted religious freedom and intellectual prowess, the Hellenistic kings vied with each other to see who could create the largest structures and the greatest institutions.

It was the dawning of an age of advertising where appearances were more important than realities, an age of novelty, hyperbole, and ruthless self-aggrandizement. It was an age, in short, that had much in common with our own. Ptolemy, as a conservative Macedonian, may have viewed the Museum with suspicion, Greeks and Egyptians with condescension, and the cult of Sarapis with irony, but his private views no longer mattered. He was the CEO of an enterprize called Egypt, and he was dedicated wholly to its success.

Some recent scholarship has done more to confuse than to illuminate what little is known of the history of the library. With *The Vanished Library: A Wonder of the Ancient World,* Luciano Canfora[25] apparently hoped to achieve the popularity of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose.* As a history of the library of Alexandria it is needlessly confusing and appallingly uninformative.

Canfora begins his book by discussing the Mausoleum of Ramses II in Thebes. It is not until page 79 that the reader is informed of the relevance: "the *Soma* of Alexander was to be found within the Museum precincts, just as the *Soma* of Ramses was to be found within the hall in the Mausoleum." If the idea is that the

Mausoleum of Alexander was modeled on that of Ramses II, then the idea is as dubious as it is irrelevant to a history of the library.

Further, Canfora leaves the reader with the distinct impression that the library was destroyed in 640 by Amr ibn al-As under Caliph Omar. Whereas, in a sense, this is an historical fact, it is also an historical fact that there was little left to destroy. In the fourth century the historian Ammianus Marcellus had written that, by his day, the area of Alexandria called the Brucheion, the area that included the library, was virtually destroyed.[26] Perhaps two decades later, the bishop Epiphanius called the same district a desert.[27]

## THE LIGHTHOUSE

"There is an island called Pharos," says Homer in the fourth book of *The Odyssey,* "in the rolling seas off the mouth of the Nile."[28] Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, was the name of the god who inhabited the place. Like Alexandria, and like the sea itself, he took many forms. Menelaus, on his way home from Troy, grabs Proteus and holds on to him, while the god transforms himself into various shapes: a snake, a boar, a tree, and even running water. Eventually Menelaus forces the god to tell him how to get home safely. He will have to go back to Egypt first, sail on the Nile, and make sacrifices to the gods.

According to one tradition, Alexander the Great remembered this episode in a dream and decided to visit the island.[29] His trip to Pharos inspired him to choose this location for the new city to be named after him.

Eventually, a great lighthouse was built on the eastern extremity of the island. Indeed, Pharos became synonymous with lighthouse. The French *phare* and Italian *faro* still attest to this association. At Alexandria, the water was shallow at the entrance to the eastern harbor, or Great Harbor as it was called, and there were rocks, making it difficult for ships to find their way to the shore.

The date of the erection of the lighthouse is not certain. The Suda dated the building to Pyrrhus' return to Epirus in 297, thus clearly assigning it to the reign of Ptolemy I.[30] The work on the lighthouse probably took several decades and may not have been completed until the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.[31]

It was made of white stone, either marble or limestone. It was several storeys high and, according to Strabo, dedicated by Sostratus of Cnidus to the safety of those who sail.[32] Lucian adds the detail that the lighthouse was dedicated to the Savior Gods *(theois sotersi).*[33] Ptolemy Soter and his wife Berenice may be the Savior Gods, but there are other theories.[34] The Savior Gods may have been Castor and Pollux, the Dioscuri, who protected sailors. It is even possible that Lucian got the inscription wrong, and that it should have read "to Zeus the Savior," for it is believed that a statue of Zeus Soter stood at the very peak of the building.[35]

It rose in three storeys to a height of perhaps four hundred feet.[36] When compared to the 480 feet of the Great Pyramid at Giza and the555 feet of the Washington Monument, this is an impressive achievement. The lowest section was square. A spiral ascent led to the second, octagonal storey, and to the third

and top section, which was cylindrical in shape. The light was probably fire, although mirrors were also used to amplify or extend the range of the flame, which could be seen for many miles out to sea.[37] Some have speculated that the mirror might actually have been a device similar to a telescope, but this seems unlikely.[38]

The overall effect must have been spectacular, rightly earning this building inclusion among the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Pharos lighthouse stood for fifteen hundred years as a stubborn reminder of Ptolemy's dreams and achievements.

## PTOLEMY AND DEMETRIUS POLIORCETES

The face on Ptolemy's coins seems to be a real person, not like the godlike Alexander or Demetrius Poliorcetes, young Apollos. The portrait is hardly flattering, much less idealized. His nose is huge, broken, and crooked. It looks like the beak of the eagle who appears on the other side of the coin, and who was a symbol of the family.

According to the legend, it was an eagle who had rescued Ptolemy after he had been exposed as a child.[39] The chin is also big, and it lurches up toward the nose, in a way that would almost be humorous, almost like a puppet in a Punch and Judy show, if the humor were not belied by the other features: by the mouth, which is fleshy and sensuous, and by the eyes, which are sad, sensitive, and weary.

We are abysmally ignorant of Ptolemy's last years. Plutarch did not write his biography, and there is little in the fragments of Diodorus for this period. Ptolemy seems to have been even less involved with the wars and politics of the Hellenistic states than he had been before the Battle of Ipsus.

He did send 150 ships to aid the Athenians in 295 as Demetrius Poliorcetes strove to regain possession of Attica. Ptolemy's fleet was not much help to the Athenians, but one significant advantage did fall to Ptolemy as a result of Demetrius' new preoccupation with Greece. He was able to regain possession of Cyprus after a decade of Antigonid domination.[40]

Poliorcetes captured Athens and went on to take control of Macedonia by 294. His rule over Greece was not fully accepted, however, and he found himself fighting in Thessaly and in Boeotia. By 288 a coalition had formed against him. This coalition included Pyrrhus, Demetrius' old ally but now also his hostile neighbor, Lysimachus, Seleucus indirectly, and Ptolemy even less directly. Ptolemy's investment in Pyrrhus had paid off. He was now doing Ptolemy's fighting for him. Pyrrhus and Lysimachus defeated Demetrius, drove him from his homeland, and divided Macedonia between themselves.[41]

Ptolemy's direct involvement in these affairs was minimal. He did sail to Greece briefly, and perhaps it was at this time that the Antigonid League of Islanders, which included, among others, Naxos, Andros, and, possibly, Delos and Samos, fell into Ptolemaic hands.[42]

## DOMESTIC PROBLEMS

Ptolemy's policy in this war against Demetrius Poliorcetes was consistent with his earlier tactics. By playing one leader off against another, he was able to reap the greatest rewards with the least amount of risk. But, if Ptolemy was minimizing his involvement in international intrigue, he was having his fair share of political intrigue at home.

Ptolemy had to make a choice of heir between Ptolemy Keraunus (the Thunderbolt), his son by Eurydice, and Ptolemy Philadelphus (sister-lover), his son by his favorite wife, Berenice. By 287 Keraunus would have been about 32 years of age, Philadelphus about 22.[43]

Demetrius of Phaleron advised Ptolemy to choose Keraunus, but Ptolemy did not follow the Athenian's advice. He chose Philadelphus. Whether he chose on the basis of the character of the two young men, or whether he chose Philadelphus as his heir simply because he was Berenice's son, we do not know. We do know the names of several of the tutors of Philadelphus, important intellectuals from the Museum.

Philetas of Cos was an influential poet, whose work, however, does not survive. His student, Zenodotus of Ephesus, succeeded him as Philadelphus' tutor and went on to become the first head of the library. Zenodotus was a literary scholar who edited the works of Homer. Strato of Lampsacus was an original, if nonetheless orthodox, Aristotelian philosopher, who eventually succeeded Theophrastus as head of the Lyceum in Athens.[44]

This information may have been preserved because Philadelphus succeeded to the throne. Since Ptolemy II became a significant king in his own right, and because he also became a strong supporter of the Museum, the names of his tutors were facts that later writers thought worthy of preservation. It does not necessarily follow that he was favored in his education over Keraunus.

Demetrius of Phaleron lived to regret his advice to Soter. As soon as Ptolemy I died and Philadelphus was sole ruler, the new king detained Demetrius of Phaleron as a virtual prisoner in the country. Demetrius died, like Cleopatra, from the bite of an asp. Whether this was suicide, an execution, or an accident is not clear, but it is probable that Ptolemy II would have eventually disposed of him.[45]

## PTOLEMY THE GOD

Philadelphus rewarded his father's selection of himself as heir by having him deified after death.[46] The two had served as joint kings for the last two years of Soter's life (285–283). Ptolemy I could probably have had himself deified in life, if he had wished. It is difficult to believe that the old Ptolemy really thought of himself as a god.

Like Augustus three centuries later, he probably resisted the idea (at least at home) during his lifetime. But Ptolemy had found the deified Alexander a useful symbol and tool. Likewise, the later Ptolemies needed Soter as a god and as a

founder for the royal cult. Philadelphus also had his mother deified, and Berenice and Soter were known together as the Savior Gods.

Around 280 Ptolemy II instituted the Ptolemaieia, a festival in honor of his father. Whether this was the formal deification ceremony process or whether that had already taken place is not certain. We know of only one reply to the festival, that of the League of Islanders.[47] This is the League that had fallen into Ptolemaic hands as a result of Demetrius Poliorcetes' increasing concentration on the Greek mainland in the early 280s.

The League members claim to be the first to have awarded Ptolemy Soter godlike honors.[48] They will send representatives, who will make sacrifices to Ptolemy in Alexandria and present him (his tomb presumably) with a golden crown. They will inscribe this event on a stele, which they will set up next to the altar of Ptolemy Soter on the island of Delos. They will send athletes to compete in his games, games which they say should be equal in stature to those at Olympia.

It is difficult to know if Ptolemy himself would have been amused, angry, or gratified. I suspect he would have been amused to see Greeks making sacrifices at his altar. His descendants would take deification seriously. They would not even wait until after they died. They would be living gods. But the old soldier and bureaucrat would probably laugh at their pretensions. What he might not have realized was that, even in death, he would continue to serve.

Ptolemy would continue to work as a dedicated public servant. He had helped to create the Hellenistic Age, and in more constructive ways even than Alexander the Great, in whose shadow he had stood for so long. This age, and this culture, and the Roman empire which inherited it, were in sore need, more than they realized, of salvation and a savior god.

## PTOLEMY'S LEGACY

Ptolemy I Soter founded the first, the most successful, and the longest lasting of the Hellenistic monarchies. Although he may have lived much of his life in the shadow of Alexander the Great, Ptolemy himself cast a long shadow.

First, he chose Egypt. The choice may have been made long before Alexander died. But Ptolemy went direct to Egypt in 323, and, except for brief sojourns, he remained there for the rest of his long life, down to 283. He was a Macedonian soldier with a good Greek education. He had studied with Aristotle, and he ended his days in the company of the scientists, scholars, and poets of the Museum, an extension and probable improvement on the Lyceum of Athens.

He probably never thought of himself as an Egyptian. Alexandrians sometimes spoke of going to Egypt, as if their city were totally separate, an outpost of Europe in Africa. To some extent that was true. But eventually Europe and Africa mingled. There was probably greater influence from Egypt than on it. After all, Egypt had been civilized long before Europe. The Greeks looked to Egypt as *their* ancient civilization.

The idea of the ruler-god, or ruler who became a god after death, was an enormously seductive idea to the Hellenistic dynasts. There is no proof that this idea came from Egypt's pharaohs, but it seems likely. Ptolemy probably resisted this notion for himself, but he fostered it for Alexander. The Ptolemaic notion of kingship influenced the Roman emperors. The later kings of Europe were forbidden by Christianity from assuming divinity direct. But down till the nineteenth century, the king was often thought to be especially close to God, the divinely inspired representative of God on earth.

No matter what Ptolemy's private prejudices, he did encourage other people in his realm. He probably encouraged Manetho, a priest of Heliopolis, to begin his history of Egypt, the most influential and useful single source on the subject. He encouraged Jews to migrate to Alexandria. Their Septuagint is a landmark in the history of Judaism and even more important to Greek-speaking Christians from ancient times down to our own.

Ptolemy's Museum and its library changed the intellectual face of the ancient world. It consolidated Greek culture, adding to it elements from many other cultures, and it preserved many works from oblivion. Of course, we have lost many of those, but that is not Ptolemy's fault. The Museum fostered a new critical approach to literature, which gave us the footnote as well as the standard divisions of Homer. It encouraged poetry and philosophy. This poetry has been called "hothouse" and "ivory tower." It can just as well be argued, however, that the Museum stimulated poetry of a new kind, and that poetry was already in decline. What the Museum did was, not to kill it, but, rather, to extend its life. If that life in Theocritus, Callimachus, Apollonius of Rhodes, and Moschus seems somewhat artificial, it is important to remember that it was genuine enough to stimulate Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Shelley, and Matthew Arnold, to name only a few.

Perhaps more importantly, the Museum gave birth to a new age of science. Euclid, Archimedes, Eratosthenes, and Aristarchus were all connected to the Museum. Their research and their discoveries constitute the most important chapter in the history of science prior to the seventeenth century of our own era. They measured the circumference of the earth, discovered the value of *pi,* and hypothesized that the earth revolved around the sun.

Ptolemy encouraged Demetrius of Phaleron to begin the greatest collection of books until relatively recent times. And not just Greek books, but books that recorded and revealed other cultures as best they could.

And, for whatever purpose, Ptolemy encouraged the cult of Sarapis and Isis. Egyptian beauty and Egyptian style were made visible and attractive to Greeks, Romans, and countless others. In the long run it was not Sarapis, the stiff Hellenized version of Osiris, who made the impact: it was Isis. She is still a household name in households who could never guess that she once offered serious competition to Jesus of Nazareth as the religious center of the Western world.

Isis was an enormously appealing figure: a wife, a savior, a mother, a woman who could be either seductive or pure or both at the same time. She nursed her

child, Horus to the Egyptians or Harpocrates to the Greeks. She offered sustenance, forgiveness, hope for the suffering, and immortality to the dying. There had never been a figure among the Greek deities so emotionally involving, so forgiving, or so appealing.

If Ptolemy Soter remained aloof from Egyptian customs, the successors to his dynasty did not. His son Ptolemy II married his own sister as the pharaohs had done. Cleopatra VII, *the* Cleopatra, the last of Ptolemy's dynasty, knew the Egyptian language. She was, of course., Macedonian, not Egyptian or African by race, but intellectually she had been seduced by Egypt.

No one other than Ptolemy deserves to be called the father and creator of the Hellenistic state. Curtius spoke truthfully when he said that Ptolemy was even more talented in the civilian arts than he was in the military. Ptolemy created the new urban setting, the cults, the institutions of higher learning, the libraries, and the lighthouse. The rest were only pale imitations.

# EPILOG

## HELLENISM, IMPERIALISM, RACISM, AND INFLUENCE

European historians of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries strove to show how Alexander and his Hellenistic Successors brought the "light of civilization" to the "poor, dark, benighted" nations of the world. This was a racist attitude and a defense, conscious or not, of nineteenth- and twentieth-century imperialism. Modern imperialism began to crumble in the Second World War and remains only in scattered and indirect ways in the 1990s.

Now we have come full circle with the *Black Athena* argument, which implies that there was never anything unique or admirable in the European culture which began in Greece. Greece took everything, it is argued, from Egyptian and Asian models.

Many sober and well-meaning historians have taken a middle-of-the-road approach by suggesting that there was little influence in either direction. Peter Green (*Alexander to Actium,* "Preface," xv) calls the notion of a deliberate attempt to Hellenize Egypt and Asia a "pernicious myth," and I must agree. Ptolemy certainly never sought, in any way, to fuse the races of his kingdom. But Eric Turner's notion that Soter was never "consciously Egyptianizing"[1] seems excessive.

I have tried to paint a picture of Ptolemy as a practical, patient, level-headed general and administrator. He was a Macedonian, imbued with a high regard for Greek culture. There can be little doubt that he thought he and his countrymen were superior to Egyptians, Jews, and Asians. Ptolemy did not think of himself as an Egyptian, and he had every intention of maintaining Greek as the superior culture in his kingdom. But, as even Turner admits, in a land where Macedonians and Greeks were vastly outnumbered, Ptolemy had to "seek for cooperation of the governed."[2]

His motive was power. This biography has attempted to show that Ptolemy sought to gain his ends with a minimum of force. Turner reminds us that "Sarapis was not worshiped under that name by Egyptians in Egyptian temples."[3] But Isis was. And it was surely not lost on the Egyptian natives that the royal cult of the

Macedonians, unlike that of the Persians, was suspiciously similar to their own religion.

However, it seems to me more important to shed the notion that influence is a dirty word. Can anyone doubt that India was influenced by England when English is the most widely spoken language in the country? Can anyone who has read T.S.Eliot or E.M.Forster deny that England was influenced by its presence in India? This is not, of itself, a negative comment on either country.

Influence can take place between equals or non-equals. It is a constant in history. The black slaves who worked the plantations of the southern United States influenced the plantation owners and their descendants profoundly. The southern accent is one obvious result. Much of what is unique in the culture of the United States, including jazz and virtually all forms of American popular music, grew out of the interaction of the European and the African, even though the African was segregated, tortured, and degraded.

The African American was likewise influenced. To take the example of music: jazz was not a native African art form. Jazz was born when African rhythms were applied to European musical instruments and forms. It was neither African nor European, but a collision or combination of both. To state the fact is not to justify slavery. It happened. The world is richer for it, even if no one would endorse the institution of slavery, because it produced the music of Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and the Modern Jazz Quartet.

Similarly, Ptolemaic Egypt happened. Ptolemy did not go to Egypt from any philanthropic motive, but he did go. And the world was changed as a result. Biographers, at least those who do not set out purposely to vilify their subjects, often end up admiring or defending them. It is an occupational hazard.

The Macedonian conquest of Egypt, although virtually bloodless, was a deliberate act of conquest and aggression. Ptolemy was an autocratic ruler who had no sympathy for the rights, freedoms, or privileges of his Macedonian subjects. There has been some discussion of a constitution of Alexandria, although there is no real evidence for it. Ptolemy did apparently, with the aid of Demetrius of Phaleron, draw up a code of laws for the city. But even this is window-dressing.

There can be no doubt that Ptolemy was firmly in charge, an absolute monarch. There can be no doubt either that Jews, Asians, and native Egyptians were, at best, second-class citizens. We could compare Ptolemaic Egypt to segregated South Africa and find there a reasonable metaphor.

In a private letter to me, Professor Peter Green described Ptolemy as "a conniving, pragmatic old shit." Yes. Professor Green went on to call him: "a monument to the rewards of carefully limited ambitions." That half of the formula also deserves consideration. We must not romanticize Ptolemy or confuse the "old shit" with his own, or his descendants', propaganda.

On the other hand, we should try to see him in his own time. It would be impossible, given the conditions of the late fourth and early third centuries BC, to expect Ptolemy to create a democratic republic in Egypt with freedom and equality for all races, religions, and sexes. This is an unrealistic expectation.

Ptolemy was an autocrat who ruled over a land without freedom or equality. The latter had never existed in the ancient world, and the former disappeared with Alexander, not to reappear for over two thousand years. But Ptolemy did live in Egypt, if we can overlook for the moment the dubious semantic question of whether Alexandria was "in" or "by" Egypt. Unlike the Persians who preceded him, and the Romans and (for centuries) the Moslems who came later, the Ptolemys were native pharaohs. Ptolemy's presence facilitated a swapping of ideas that went both ways.

The European concept and practice of monarchy was profoundly influenced by the Egyptian model. Philip II and Alexander the Great may have provided the catalyst for the change back to kingship in Greece. But it was not the Macedonian model of king as commander-in-chief that became typical in the Hellenistic world; it was the Egyptian concept of the king as a god.

This idea, in turn, influenced the Roman emperors, most of whom waited until death to be gods, but some of whom, like Caligula, preferred divinity during their lifetime. Christian monotheism precluded divine monarchs, but the medieval king was especially close to God, His special representative on earth. This was an Egyptian, not a Greek or Roman influence.

Egyptian religion influenced Christianity. Isis, especially as she was reinterpreted and introduced to Europe by the Ptolemies, made an enormous impact. She offered a personal religion and promised immortality for the individual soul. She was a loving mother, and her frequent representation as suckling Horus or Harpocrates was certainly the iconographic model for the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child.

Egypt too was profoundly influenced by its contact with Greeks and Macedonians. Egypt was Hellenized to the degree that it could accept a foreign monotheistic religion like Christianity. It is difficult to imagine Egypt making that transition had it not become part of the Greco-Roman world. There is no evidence that Persian monotheism, for instance, had any significant impact on Egypt in the centuries before Ptolemy.

From Christianity to Islam is not such a great leap as from an extreme polytheism to a radical monotheism. Egypt remains the most open and cosmopolitan of Moslem countries. The existence of Alexandria must have something to do with that. Alexandria remained a cosmopolitan city down at least to the 1950s. Lawrence Durrell caught much of the international flavor of the city as it existed before and during the Second World War in his justly famous Alexandria Quartet: "What is resumed in the word of Alexandria?…Five races, five languages, a dozen creeds: five fleets turning through their greasy reflections behind the harbour bar. But there are more than five sexes and only demotic Greek seems to distinguish among them."[4] It may be true that Europe learned more from Egypt than Egypt from Europe, but both were profoundly changed by the contact.

I quoted Shakespeare's *Henry V* at the beginning of this book, not because I have any sentimental attachment to monarchy, but because I believe that Ptolemy took his duties seriously. He was a hard-working administrator. He inherited, in

Egypt, a complex bureaucracy. To what degree he altered that bureaucracy it is impossible to know. We have a great many papyri from Ptolemaic Egypt, beginning with the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. There is very little from the reign of the first Ptolemy.

Egypt was divided into sections called nomes. We know of a Memphite nome and an Arsinoite nome (i.e. the Fayyum district southwest of Memphis), for example, but the exact demarcation of the nomes in the Ptolemaic period cannot be accurately reconstructed from the surviving evidence. There were probably about forty or perhaps slightly more in the early Ptolemaic period, "divided almost equally between upper (southern) and lower (northern) Egypt."[5]

Much of this system dated back to earlier pharaonic times. A nome was subdivided into toparchies, and these toparchies were subdivided into villages. There were three officers, independent of each other, ineach nome: a *nomarch* or governor, an *oikonomos* or treasurer, and the *basilikos grammateus* or scribe. These three officials were under the jurisdiction of the *dioiketes,* or Minister of the Interior, who resided in Alexandria. Private property existed, but most of the land belonged to the king. Ptolemy inherited a fully developed system and made changes as events dictated.

The major Macedonian innovation here, apparently,[6] was the addition of a *strategos,* or general, for each nome. As time went on, long after the reign of Ptolemy I, the *strategos* tended to become more powerful at the expense of the other officials, especially the *nomarch.*

Alexandria itself was divided into five sections, named after the first five letters of the alphabet, which, in the Greek system, doubled for numbers: *alpha, beta, gamma, delta,* and *epsilon.* Alexandria had a code of laws, but it is not certain whether it had a constitution. We know that Cyrene had a constitution, and it is sometimes argued that if Cyrene had a constitution, then certainly Alexandria would have had one too. This is not a persuasive argument, since Cyrene's constitution may have been a means of controling an isolated and distant province. Alexandria, being right under the king's nose, had no such necessity. Alexandria dominated Lower Egypt. Ptolemais was created in order to maintain a Macedonian presence in Upper Egypt.

Cyrene, Cyprus, and Coele Syria were under the jurisdiction of military governors, appointed directly by the king. There were also financial ministers, who were not under the supervision of the military governor. This arrangement was apparently meant to discourage separatist revolts, although a similar arrangement had not prevented Cleomenes from taking over Egypt before Ptolemy's arrival. Indeed, there were also occasional revolts in these provinces.

There is no evidence that this system came into effect during the reign of Ptolemy Soter. In fact, the administration of each colonial possession, based on pre-existing, indigenous circumstances, is unique.

In Cyprus, the traditional kings, although clearly Ptolemy's subordinates, continued to rule until 312. In that year, Ptolemy made Nikocreon, one of those traditional kings, *strategos* of all Cyprus. On Nikocreon's death in 310, the island

came under the command of Menelaus, Ptolemy's brother. Menelaus remained in charge of Cyprus until the island fell into Antigonid hands in 306. Probably neither Nikocreon nor Menelaus was a *strategos* in the later Ptolemaic sense.[7]

Cyrene, and its neighboring cities, collectively known as Cyrenaica, also submitted to Alexander. However, it soon revolted, under the leadership of a Spartan soldier of fortune named Thibron. Certain Cyrenaean oligarchs appealed to Ptolemy, who sent Ophellas to put down the revolt. Ophellas remained in Cyrenaica as a governor until his death *c.* 308. There were several revolts during that time, and whether Ophellas joined them or opposed them is not entirely clear.

Ptolemy granted the Cyrenaeans a constitution in which he himself is described as their *strategos*. Ophellas was replaced by Magas, Berenice's son by her first husband, as governor of Cyrene. Magas remained loyal to his stepfather. He rebelled, however, under Ptolemy II Philadelphus, but the two were reconciled before Magas' death *c.* 253.

There is no real evidence for Ptolemy's administration of Palestine, Phoenicia, and Coele Syria. One would expect a heavier military presence there, since this region was the most bitterly contested Ptolemaic possession.

Ptolemy administered his kingdom carefully and economically. He could not totally avoid involvement in the wars of the Successors, but he kept that involvement to a minimum, and he did not waste his opportunity by striving always to conquer more land.

Ptolemy did more than any of his contemporaries to promote the arts of civilization. Alexander may have founded Alexandria, but it was Ptolemy who made her great. He adorned her, in the words of E.M.Forster, "with architecture and scholarship and song."[8]

Inspired by Aristotle, Ptolemy created the Museum and its library. The imitation outshone the original. Ptolemy had the means and the desire not only to bring together the greatest collection of books and learning the world had ever known, but to stimulate new learning as well. The Museum not only sponsored the poetry of Callimachus, Apollonius of Rhodes, and Theoctitus; it encouraged abstract, scientific research as well. Euclid brought together all the knowledge that the Greeks had amassed in the field of geometry. Six hundred years later his follower Theon put Euclid's *Elements of Geometry* into its final form. Theon's daughter, the brilliant Hypatia, perhaps the last great product of the Museum, was a philosopher, a mathematician, and a scientist. She was murdered, literally torn apart (AD 415), by fanatical Christians, with the encouragement of their leader Cyril. She had committed the unforgiveable sin of being a pagan. Cyril was made a saint by the Church.

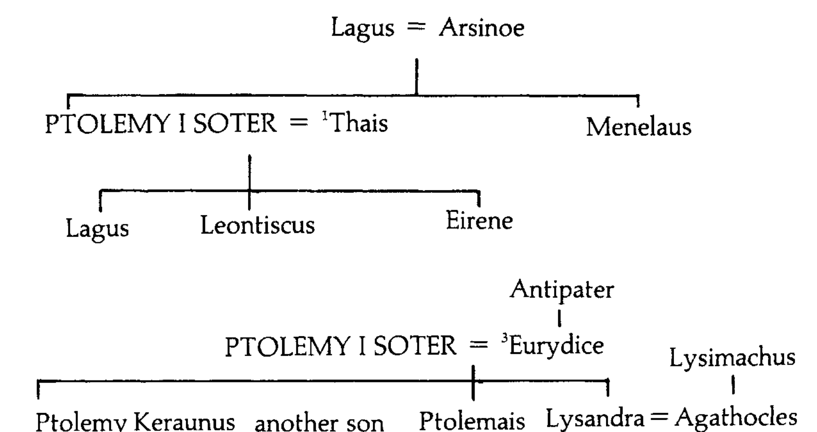
Archimedes lived most of his life in Syracuse, but he was probably educated in Alexandria and certainly maintained contact, through correspondence, with the leading scientists of the Museum. Archimedes discovered the value of *pi*—the ratio of the circumferenceto the diameter of a circle. He discovered the laws of the lever and for the displacement of floating bodies. He invented the Archimedes screw, still used in Egypt for pumping and irrigating water.

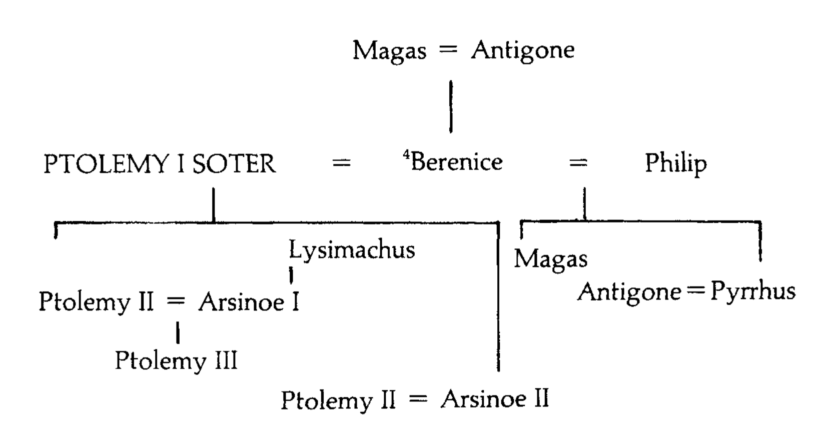
Eratosthenes calculated the circumference of the earth to within a reasonably close approximation of modern measurements. He was the successor to the poet Apollonius of Rhodes, author of the *Argonautica,* as head of the Museum's library. Eratosthenes argued that "India could be reached by sailing westward from Spain."[9]

Hipparchus of Nicaea mapped the heavens and speculated on the birth and death of stars. Claudius Ptolemy (whose relationship to the royal family, if any, is not known) wrote the most comprehensive treatises on astronomy and geography in the ancient world, works that were not superseded for fourteen centuries. Finally, Aristarchus of Samos advanced the heliocentric theory, that the earth revolves around the sun, eighteen hundred years before Copernicus.

This is the inheritance of Alexandria and its Museum, what Carl Sagan calls "the promise of a brilliant scientific civilization," and "the greatest city the Western world had ever seen."[10] These were the flowers that sprang up from the seeds that Ptolemy sowed. Perhaps we have reason to admire the "old shit" after all.

# THE FAMILY OF PTOLEMY




There were four known women in Ptolemy's life: 1 Thais to whom he was probably no married, 2 Artacama with whom he had no known children, 3 Eurydice, and 4 Berenice.

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(all dates are BC)

| | |
|---|---|
| *c.367* | Birth of Ptolemy |
| 356 | Birth of Alexander III the Great |
| 338 | Battle of Chaeronea: Macedonian hegemony over Greece |
| | Ptolemy meets Thais (?) |
| 336 | Assassination of Philip II: Alexander ascends the throne |
| 335 | Destruction of Thebes |
| 334 | Alexander begins the conquest of Persia |
| | Battle of Granicus |
| 333 | Battle of Issus |
| 332 | Sieges of Tyre and Gaza |
| 332–331 | Alexander and Ptolemy(?) in Egypt |
| | Foundation of Alexandria |
| 330 | Destruction of Persepolis |
| 329 | Capture of Bessus |
| 327–326 | Siege of the Aornus Rock |
| 325 | Attack on Harmatelia |
| 324 | Ptolemy marries Artacama at mass marriages of Susa |
| 323 | Death of Alexander in Babylon |
| 323–305 | Ptolemy is satrap of Egypt |
| 322 | Ptolemy executes Cleomenes and captures the body of Alexander |
| 321 | Ptolemy marries Eurydice |
| | Ptolemy spreads his influence to Cyprus and Cyrene |
| 320 | Perdiccas is killed after the failure of his attempt to invade Egypt |
| | Settlement at Triparadisus |
| | Ptolemy conquers Syria and Palestine |

| | |
|---|---|
| 317 | Ptolemy marries Berenice |
| 313 | Ptolemy moves capital from Memphis to Alexandria (?) |
| 312 | Ptolemy defeats Demetrius Poliorcetes at Battle of Gaza |
| 309 | Birth of Ptolemy II Philadelphia on the island of Cos |
| 308–7 | Ptolemy's trip to Greece |
| 306 | Demetrius Poliorcetes defeats Ptolemy and captures Cyprus |
| 305–304 | Siege of Rhodes |
| | Ptolemy becomes Soter |
| 305–283 | Ptolemy is king of Egypt |
| 301 | Battle of Ipsus |
| 300 | Strato of Lampsachus is tutor to Ptolemy II |
| 299 | Pyrrhus marries Berenice's daughter, Antigone |
| 297 | Death of Cassander |
| | Ptolemy and Demetrius of Phaleron begin to plan the Museum and its library |
| | Beginning of the construction of the Pharos lighthouse |
| 295 | Ptolemy recovers Cyprus after a decade of Antigonid rule |
| 288 | Ptolemy gains control of the League of Islanders |
| 287 | Ptolemy picks Philadelphus, Berenice's son, as his successor |
| 285 | Philadelphus made joint king |
| 283 | Death of Ptolemy I and Demetrius Poliorcetes |
| 283–246 | Ptolemy II Philadelphus king of Egypt |
| 281 | Keraunus kills Seleucus |
| 280 | Festival proclaimed in honor of the deified Ptolemy Soter |
| 279 | Keraunus, after becoming king of Macedonia, dies in battle |

# GLOSSARY OF PERSONAL NAMES

ALCETAS was the brother of Perdiccas. Perdiccas, before he died, sent Alcetas to work with and to obey Eumenes. Like Attalus *(q.v.)* he joined Eumenes and Ptolemy in the war against Antigonus the One-Eyed. He lost a major battle to Antigonus in 319. Attalus and most of the army were captured, but Alcetas fled to the Pisidian city of Termessus. Alcetas learned that some of the older men in the city were plotting to hand him over to Antigonus and committed suicide (Diod. 18.44–6).

ALEXANDER III THE GREAT. The story that Ptolemy was his half-brother is probably not true. Alexander's life and early death made Ptolemy's career possible.

ALEXANDER IV. The son of Alexander the Great and Roxane, daughter of the Sogdian baron Oxyartes. He was born shortly after his father's death in 323. He was murdered in 310 by Cassander. His death led eventually to the assumption of kingship by the leading Successors.

ANTIGONUS THE ONE-EYED (MONOPHTHALMUS) belonged to the generation of Philip II. Alexander made him governor of Phrygia in 333. His great opportunity came in 320, after the Triparadisus settlement left him in charge of the army of Asia. From that point until his death at the Battle of Ipsus in 301, he and his son Demetrius Poliorcetes made a concerted bid for domination. His descendants, the Antigonids, did rule Macedonia, but not the rest of Alexander's empire as the dynasty's founder envisaged.

ANTIOCHUS was the name of the father and the son of Seleucus *(q.v.)*. It became a popular name in the Seleucid dynasty: Antiochus I Soter, Seleucus' son (ruled 281–261), Antiochus II Theos (261–246), Antiochus III the Great (223–187), Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164).

ANTIPATER was a close friend and adviser to Philip II. He accompanied Alexander to Athens in the mission to conclude peace after the Battle of Chaeronea in 338. Alexander had many enemies at the time of Philip's assassination, and Antipater's support was crucial. Alexander rewarded him by making Antipater regent of Macedonia in his absence. Antipater put down a rebellion of the Spartans while Alexander was alive, and a general rebellion of Greek cities, including Athens, as soon as the king died. Antipater forced the suicide of Demosthenes the orator and, generally, supported oligarchies and dictators over democracies. He joined the coalition against Perdiccas. His was a major voice at the settlement of Triparadisus in 320, but he died one year later.

ARISTANDER was Alexander's favorite soothsayer. After the accidental discovery of petroleum in the northwestern region of the Persian empire, Aristander said that it boded difficulties to come, but also eventual victory.

ARISTOTLE was the son of a doctor who was close to the Argead family. He studied with Plato at the Academy in Athens. From *c.* 342 to 340 he taught Alexander and some of his friends, including Ptolemy, at Mieza in Macedonia.

Aristotle's influence on Ptolemy was great, an influence that was prominent in the creation of the Museum of Alexandria. Aristotle returned to Athens and founded the Lyceum, but his Macedonian connections made him unpopular. He left the Lyceum to Theophrastus lest the Athenians "sin twice against philosophy," and retired to Chalcis on the island of Euboea. He outlived Alexander by only about one year. The Lyceum's penchant for collecting books was the probable inspiration for the Museum's library.

ARRHIDAEUS was an officer in Alexander's army and is not the same as the king, Philip III Arrhidaeus *(q.v.)*. On Alexander's death in Babylon in 323, Arrhidaeus was put in charge of the great king's funeral (Diod. 18.3.5). He was pursued by Attalus but successfully eluded him and delivered the body into Ptolemy's hands. Arrhidaeus was apparently rewarded by being appointed as a guardian of the kings along with Pithon, the man who had killed Perdiccas in 321. He gave up this position in the same year, at Triparadisus (Diod. 18.39). He fought against Antigonus the One-Eyed at Byzantium in 317, but afterward may have gone over to his side (see Richard Billows, *Antigonus the One-Eyed* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990) 375).

ARSINOE was the name of Ptolemy's mother. Arsinoe I was the daughter of Lysimachus of Thrace and his first wife, Nicaea. She married Ptolemy II Philadelphus, only to be replaced by...

ARSINOE II, the daughter of Ptolemy and Berenice. She first married Lysimachus *(q.v.)* and then her half-brother Ptolemy Keraunus *(q.v.)*. She married her full brother Ptolemy II Philadelphus *c.* 276, and together they were worshiped as the *Theoi Adelphoi* ("Sibling Gods"). Callimachus wrote a poem commemorating her death.

ARTACAMA was Ptolemy's first official wife. He married her, apparently at Alexander's insistence, as part of the mass nuptials of Susa in 324. The marriage was probably shortlived and produced no known children. Artacama was the daughter of Artabazus, who had been satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia under Artaxerxes II and satrap of Bactria under Alexander.

ATTALUS was the Macedonian nobleman and general whose niece, Cleopatra, was Philip II's last wife. This marriage caused great bitterness and an open break between Philip on the one side, and Olympias and Alexander on the other. After Philip's death, Alexander commanded Parmenion to have Attalus killed. ATTALUS was also the name of Perdiccas' brother-in-law. This Attalus tried unsuccessfully to prevent Ptolemy from taking the body of Alexander to Egypt. After Perdiccas' death, he encouraged Eurydice, the wife of Philip III Arrhidaeus, in her schemes to take control. He was taken prisoner by Antigonus the One-Eyed in 319. After several years, he and his fellow prisoners escaped; they were attacked, and withstood the attack for over a year (Diod. 19.16).

BARSINE was Alexander's mistress and the mother of his illegitimate son Heracles. She was the daughter of the Persian satrap Artabazus and so the sister of Ptolemy's first wife Artacama *(q.v.)*. After the death of all the legitimate members of the royal family, Heracles became a pawn of the competing dynasts. He was murdered in 309 by Polyperchon as a part of a secret compact with Cassander. The whole Barsine episode is controversial. For the main arguments, see W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Cambridge 1948) II, 330–8; H.Breve,

*Das Alexanderreich* (Munich 1926) II, nos. 206 and 353; R.M.Errington, "From Babylon to Triparadeisos," *JHS* 90 (1970): 50.

BERENICE came to Egypt with Eurydice, who was her relative. She was the daughter of Magas and Antigone. A scholium on Theocritus has sometimes been emended to read that "Lagus" was Berenice's father, and so Ptolemy's sister. This is surely wrong (see Grace Harriet Macurdy, *Hellenistic Queens* (Baltimore 1932; repr. 1985) 104–5). Berenice was the widow of a man named Philip, with whom she had two children, with the same names as her parents, Magas *(q.v.)* and Antigone. Antigone married Pyrrhus of Epirus. Ptolemy married Berenice *c.* 317, and they produced Ptolemy II Philadelphus *(q.v,)* and Arsinoe II *(q.v.)*.

BESSUS was the satrap of Bactria. After the murder of Darius III, in which he was involved, Bessus assumed the royal title. Two of his leading generals, Spitamenes *(q.v.)* and Dataphernes, conspired against him. Ptolemy was in charge of the mission to bring Bessus to Alexander. Alexander sent Bessus to Ecbatana, where he was executed.

CALANUS was an Indian mystic sage of the type that the Greeks called Gymnosophists or Naked Philosophers. He accompanied Alexander from India back to Persia. Calanus became sick and requested a funeral pyre on which he could throw himself while still alive. Ptolemy planned an elaborate ceremony for this purpose.

CASSANDER has the most unsavory reputation of all the Successors. He probably did not poison Alexander, as was sometimes alleged, but he did execute Alexander's mother, his wife, and his child. He came to control Macedonia even though his own father Antipater did not choose him to succeed. Antipater chose instead Polyperchon *(q.v.),* with whom Cassander had to contend for several years for control of the state. Ptolemy often aligned himself with Cassander, as he had also with his father. They both consistently opposed Antigonus the One-Eyed. Cassander married the daughter of Philip II, Thessalonike, and built a city which he named after her. Thessalonike became the chief city of Macedonia, second only to Constantinople in Byzantine Greece, and second only to Athens in modern Greece.

CLEOMENES was a Greek from the Egyptian trading-post of Naucratis, southwest of the site of Alexandria. Alexander attempted to divide the command of Egypt when he left it in 331, but Cleomenes, whom he had left in charge of the treasury, soon became the virtual satrap. There is a controversial episode in Arrian (7.23–4)where Alexander instructs Cleomenes to create two shrines in honor of the recently deceased Hephaestion: one in the city of Alexandria and the other on the island of Pharos. In return, Alexander will forgive all Cleomenes' wrongdoings, both past and future. This story is probably Ptolemaic propaganda, since, soon after he went to Egypt, Ptolemy had Cleomenes executed. Ptolemy punished the man who had extorted enormous sums from every level of society, but he probably did not bother to return the ill-gotten money.

CLEOPATRA is a common feminine Macedonian name. The most important woman of that name in this book was the sister of Alexander the Great. Her wedding to Alexander of Epirus in 336 was the occasion of Philip II's assassination. Alexander of Epirus died in 330, and Cleopatra was next married

to Leonnatus, one of Alexander's Bodyguards. After Leonnatus' death in 322, Perdiccas, with Eumenes' encouragement, made overtures of marriage to her. The union was also encouraged by Olympias, who saw Perdiccas as the best protection for her grandson, Alexander IV. After Perdiccas' death Cleopatra was often approached by the Successors, but never married again. After the deaths of Philip III Arrhidaeus, Alexander IV, and Heracles, Cleopatra was even more in demand. She was a full sister of Alexander the Great, and the only other remaining member of the Argead dynasty was her half-sister Thessalonike, Cassander's wife. She was approached by Lysimachus, Antigonus, and Cassander. However, she was inclined to marry Ptolemy, who seems to have been actively courting her in 308. It was, perhaps, for this reason that she was killed in that year. The orders for her death came, indirectly, from Antigonus the One-Eyed (Diod. 20.37.3–6).

CLEOPATRA was also the name of Ptolemy V's wife, the sister-wife of Ptolemy VI, and the daughter of Ptolemy VI. The most famous owner of the name was Cleopatra VII, daughter of Ptolemy XII. She was intelligent and well educated, and had even learned the Egyptian language, which was unusual, probably unique, among the Ptolemies. Julius Caesar helped her to regain power after a short palace revolt in 48. Their son, Ptolemy XV Caesar (also known as Caesarion), became joint ruler with his mother in 44. Cleopatra met Mark Antony (Marcus Antonius) in 41 at Tarsus, but it was not until 37 that their alliance, personal and political, became permanent. There was never a realistic possibility that Cleopatra could revive a truly independent Ptolemaic Egypt without the aid of one Roman faction or another. She showed considerable skill and courage in keeping Egypt afloat as long as she did. As the last Ptolemy—indeed, as the last leader of an independent Egypt for almost two thousand years—she was admired and fondly remembered.

CLITUS was one of Alexander's generals, who saved his king's life at the Granicus River in 334. Alexander, drunk and angry, nonetheless killed him with a spear or a pike at Maracanda in 328 (Arr. 4.8–9; Curt. 8.1.19–52). Ptolemy attempted to restrain Alexander from this unfortunate action.

CRATERUS rose rapidly in Alexander's army. He fought at Granicus, Issus, and Gaugemela. After the murder of Parmenion in 330, Craterus became Alexander's leading general and held many separate commands. He was sent home in 324 to replace, if not also to murder, Antipater. When Alexander died, Craterus joined forces with Antipater to put down the Greek rebellion known as the Lamian War (323–322). He would have been one of the leading Successors had he not been killed, early in the struggle, in a battle against Eumenes (321).

CYNANE (or CYNNA) was the daughter of Philip II and his first wife, Audata. She was the widow of the Macedonian king Amyntas IV. She successfully married her daughter Eurydice *(q.v.)* to the feeble-minded Philip III Arrhidaeus, but she won the hostility of Perdiccas and was murdered by the order of his brother Alcetas.

DATAPHERNES. See SPITAMENES.

DEMETRIUS OF PHALERON was a highly intelligent and eccentric author, philosopher, and politician. He was the virtual ruler of Athens, as the autocratic puppet of Cassander, from 317 to 307. He was the friend and associate of

Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor at the Lyceum. He eventually went to Egypt and became one of Ptolemy's closest and most influential advisers, especially in matters concerning the Museum and its library. He advised Ptolemy to make Ptolemy Keraunus *(q.v.)* the successor to the throne. This won Demetrius the enmity of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who, soon after his father's death, put Demetrius of Phaleron under house arrest somewhere in the country outside Alexandria. Demetrius died of snake-bite, although it is not clear whether this was an accident, suicide, or murder. He was a convert to Sarapis; this may have been expected of him as a leader of the Museum. (For a similar suggestion, see J.P.Mahaffy, *The Empire of the Ptolemies* (London 1895) 94.) None of his books survives, but we know from Diogenes Laertius (5.80–1) that he wrote works on Homer, Aesop, Socrates, love, rhetoric, marriage, and old age among others. He wrote, at length, on the constitutions and legislation of Athens, and he wrote a biography of Ptolemy.

DEMETRIUS POLIORCETES ("BESIEGER OF CITIES") was also Demetrius I, the second king of the Antigonid dynasty. He fought at the side of his father, Antigonus the One-Eyed, against Eumenes. He lost the Battle of Gaza against Ptolemy in 312. But six years later Demetrius defeated Ptolemy at the Battle of Salamis, taking the island of Cyprus out of Ptolemaic hands for a decade. He is best remembered for his long siege of Rhodes, although despite all the time, money, and effort he spent on it, he still failed to capture the island. After the defeat at Ipsus in 301, Demetrius recovered and went on to become king of Macedonia. Demetrius' preoccupation with the Greek mainland allowed Ptolemy to recover Cyprus in 295 and gain control of the League of Islanders in 288. After Alexander, Demetrius was perhaps the most charismatic leader of his generation, but his talent was strictly military. He lacked the qualities that made Ptolemy a good ruler. Lysimachus and Pyrrhus invaded Macedonia and chased him out in 288. Demetrius continued to fight until 285, at which time he became a prisoner of Seleucus. Seleucus gave him free rein to drink himself to death. He died in 283, the same year as Ptolemy.

DEMETRIUS THE BODYGUARD was put to death for complicity in the Philotas conspiracy in 330. Ptolemy succeeded him as a member of the Bodyguards.

EUMENES, a Greek from the Thracian city of Cardia, was Alexander's secretary. He was often at odds with Alexander's favorite, Hephaestion, which put him in a bad position after the latter's death. Still, Eumenes, who seems to have had enormous agility as a politician, as a diplomat, and even as a soldier, not only survived but prospered. As a Greek, he was not likely to succeed to the Macedonian throne, and so usually took the side of the centralist forces against the local dynasts. Eumenes was on Ptolemy's side only by virtue of their common hostility to Antigonus the One-Eyed. Plutarch compared Eumenes and Sertorius as aliens who commanded large armies of various ethnic backgrounds. Both, too, were betrayed by their own men. Antigonus the One-Eyed had Eumenes executed in 316.

EURYDICE, also known as Adea, was the wife of Philip III Arrhidaeus. She was the daughter of Cynane *(q.v.)* and Amyntas IV of Macedonia. Eurydice tried to rule through her husband and aligned herself with Cassander. Olympias, who was aligned with Polyperchon, was determined to make certain that neither she nor her husband would be a threat to her own grandchild, Alexander IV.

Olympias imprisoned the couple in a tiny place, subjected them to hardships, and ordered the murder of Philip III Arrhidaeus. She sent Eurydice a sword, a noose, and some hemlock, giving her a choice of suicide. Eurydice chose hanging, not with Olympias' noose, but with her own belt. She died in late summer or early fall of 317. She had been trained as a soldier and was known to go to battle fully armed. This was very unusual for the women of that time.

EURYDICE, the daughter of Antipater, married Ptolemy *c.* 321. Ptolemy and Eurydice had at least four children: two sons, including Ptolemy called Keraunus, and two daughters, Ptolemais and Lysandra. Lysandra married Agathocles, son of Lysimachus, and Ptolemais was one of the several wives of Demetrius Poliorcetes. She was the mother of Demetrius the Fair, who attempted to take Cyrene away from Ptolemy II Philadelphus *(c.* 255) on the order of his half-brother, Antigonus Gonatus.

HARPALUS was a youthful companion of Alexander and Ptolemy. He was crippled and could not be a soldier. Alexander put him in charge of the treasury. Harpalus twice fled his king to avoid punishment for extortion. He was killed on the island of Crete by Thibron, one of his own officers. Thibron used the money that Harpalus had taken from Alexander to finance the conquest of Cyrenaica. Ptolemy sent his general Ophellas *(q.v.)* to fight Thibron, and, as a result, Cyrenaica came under Egyptian control.

HEPHAESTION was Alexander's closest friend and possibly his lover. He was part of the group with which Ptolemy spent his youth. Alexander reacted to Hephaestion's death in 324 with extravagant grief, which hastened his own death a few months later.

HERACLES. See BARSINE.

LAGUS was the name of Ptolemy's father, about whom very little is known. For him, the Ptolemaic dynasty is sometimes called the Lagid dynasty. Lagus is also the name of Ptolemy's son by Thais who won a chariot race in the Lycaea, an Arcadian festival, in 308/307 ($SIG^3$).

LAOMEDON OF MYTILENE was one of Alexander's boyhood friends. He had been banished from Macedonia along with Ptolemy and others by Philip II, in the wake of Alexander's attempt to marry the daughter of Pixodarus, satrap of Caria. He was recalled in 336 as soon as Alexander became king. After Alexander's death, he was appointed the satrap of Syria by both Perdiccas and Antipater. Ptolemy tried to bribe him into giving up Phoenicia and Syria. Laomedon refused, and so Ptolemy sent a small force under Nicanor to oppose him in 320. In the conflict Laomedon was taken prisoner, but he escaped and fled to Alcetas *(q.v.)* in Caria (Diod. 18.43; Curt. 10.10.2; App. *Syr.* 52).

LYSIMACHUS was only a few years younger than Ptolemy, and his career was, in many ways, similar. Pausanias (1.9.5) records the legend that Alexander imprisoned Lysimachus in a room with a lion, and that Lysimachus overpowered the beast. This legend probably grew out of an incident, recorded by Curtius (8.1.15), in which Lysimachus was hurt during a lion-hunt in Syria. He was one of Alexander's Bodyguards and became governor of Thrace on Alexander's death in 323. He consistently opposed Antigonus the One-Eyed and fought against him at Ipsus in 301. As his reward for helping to defeat Antigonus, Lysimachus received territory in the north and central parts of Asia Minor. It was after this that he helped replan the city of Ephesus, which was

built on a swamp and so was prone to epidemics of malaria. Ephesus remained on Lysimachus' new site throughout the Roman and Byzantine periods, and this is the city that has been excavated and reconstructed in modern times. He appointed Philetaerus, son of Attalus, as guardian of his treasury at Pergamum, thus, inadvertently, helping to create the Attalid dynasty of Pergamum. Lysimachus often worked in alliance with Ptolemy and Cassander, and he was as consistently opposed to Demetrius Poliorcetes as he had been to his father, Antigonus the One-Eyed. In 288 he joined forces with Pyrrhus to drive Demetrius out of Macedonia. In 281 he made war on Seleucus and lost his life in the battle. Lysimachus' kingdom was divided between Macedonia and the Seleucid empire and never revived as an entity. His family life, typically for this period, was complex. Lysimachus gave the name of his first wife, Nicaea, to the city which was later famous for the church councils which were held there, and the Nicaean Creed which was created at the first of these (AD 325). His daughter by Nicaea, Arsinoe I, married Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Lysimachus married Arsinoe II *(q.v.),* daughter of Ptolemy and Berenice. Arsinoe II was apparently a very strong-willed woman and tended to dominate both Lysimachus and her own brother Philadelphus after she married him *c.* 276. Lysimachus' son Agathocles married Lysandra, daughter of Ptolemy and Eurydice. Arsinoe II, perhaps as a rejected lover, or perhaps to ensure the survival of her own children, conspired in the murder of Agathocles. Lysimachus and Seleucus both died in 281, two years after Ptolemy. Helen S. Lund's excellent new biography (*Lysimachus: A Study in Early Hellenistic Kingship* (London 1992)) has succeeded in rescuing a major figure from obscurity.

MAGAS was Ptolemy's stepson, the actual son of Berenice and her first husband, Philip. After the death of Ophellas *(q.v.),* Ptolemy reconquered Cyrene and placed Magas in charge. Magas remained loyal to Ptolemy I, but became increasingly independent under the rule of his half-brother, Ptolemy II. Magas married Apama, the daughter of Antiochus I, and was reconciled with Ptolemy II some time before his own death *c.* 253 (Just. 26.3).

MAZACES was the last Persian satrap of Egypt. All the troops necessary to defend the country had been sent with Sabaces *(q.v.)* to aid Darius at Issus. Mazaces had no choice but to surrender Egypt to Alexander.

MENELAUS was Ptolemy's brother. Ptolemy made him commander of all the forces, both army and navy, on the island of Cyprus in 315 (Diod. 19.62.4–5). Menelaus, after losing a battle, defended the city of Salamis on Cyprus from the attack of Demetrius Poliorcetes in 306. Ptolemy came to his rescue, but, in the worst defeat of his career, Ptolemy lost the sea battle to Demetrius (Diod. 20.47–53). He consequently lost control of Cyprus for a decade. Not much else is known of Menelaus except that he is mentioned in a papyrus from the Egyptian city of Elephantine (*P.Eleph.* 2) as a priest, presumably in the cult of his brother. Ptolemy named a city in the Delta "Menelaus" after him (Strabo 17.1.23).

NEARCHUS was a Cretan by birth. He was one of the Royal Pages, and, along with Alexander and Ptolemy, he was part of the group who studied at Mieza (*c.* 342– 340). Nearchus became Alexander's chief admiral and led the fleet on an expedition from the Indus river back to the Tigris. He wrote an account of his voyage which is preserved, in part, in Arrian's *Indica*. At the great marriage-

feast at Susa in 324, Nearchus was given the daughter of Barsine *(q.v.)*. After Alexander's death, then, when Nearchus suggested Heracles, Barsine's son, as a candidate for king, he was promoting a relative. Curtius (10.6.10–12) says that no one liked this suggestion. Whether it was because Heracles was a bastard or because he was related to Nearchus is not clear. Nearchus' subsequent career is surprisingly obscure, considering his importance under Alexander, although as a Greek he could not really hope to compete with the Macedonian Successors. He apparently aligned himself with Antigonus the One-Eyed and was sent by him to Palestine to aid Demetrius Poliorcetes against Ptolemy (Diod. 19.69.1). He may have died in the subsequent Battle of Gaza (312).

NICANOR was one of Ptolemy's generals. See Laomedon.

NICOCLES OF PAPHOS. See NIKOCREON.

NIKOCREON was the king of Salamis in Cyprus. He had supported Alexander's siege of Tyre in 332 and made an alliance with Ptolemy in 321. He fought on Ptolemy's side in Cyprus against the forces of Antigonus the One-Eyed in 315. Ptolemy made Nikocreon general *(strategos)* of Cyprus in 312. Modern scholars disagree as to whether *strategos*, in this case, carries the later Ptolemaic sense of "governor." Probably it does not. (See Roger S.Bagnall *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions outside Egypt* (Leiden 1976) 39–42.) According to the Parian marble, Nikocreon died in 311/310. Some scholars have confused Nikocreon with Nicocles, the Cypriot king of Paphos, who broke with Ptolemy and, after being captured, took his own life (Diod. 20.21). Helga Gesche ("Nikokles von Paphos und Nikokreon von Salamis", *Chiron* 4 (1974): 103–25) has shown definitively that Diodorus' account accurately portrays the death of Nicocles of Paphos, not that of Nikocreon.

OLYMPIAS, born a princess in Epirus, was the wife of Philip II and the mother of Alexander the Great. Plutarch paints a picture of her as a wild woman who slept with snakes and participated in orgiastic Dionysian rites. She was, indeed, a fierce and formidable woman. She was probably involved in the conspiracy to kill her husband. Olympias was consistently opposed to Antipater and Cassander. Polyperchon aligned himself with her in 317, and she used her power to arrange the execution of Philip III Arrhidaeus and the suicide of his wife Eurydice *(q.v.)*. Olympias was killed, if not on the orders of, certainly by the friends of, Cassander.

OPHELLAS was one of Ptolemy's generals. Ptolemy sent him to take control of Cyrene in 322/321. Ophellas' control of Cyrene became increasingly independent and personal, but whether he took part in a revolt in 313/312 is not clear. He married a certain Eurydice, of the distinguished Athenian family which had included Miltiades, the hero of the Battle of Marathon. After Ophellas' death, she became one of the several wives of Demetrius Poliorcetes (Plut. *Demetr.* 14.1). Ophellas became involved in the schemes of Agathocles, the tyrant of Syracuse. Together they planned to conquer Carthage, but Agathocles turned against Ophellas and in *c.* 308 had him killed (Diod. 20.40–2).

PAUSANIAS was the man who killed Philip II, and is not to be confused with the travel guide. Three of Alexander's young friends, including Perdiccas *(q.v.)*, pursued him after the assassination and killed him. Did they kill him to avenge Philip or to prevent Pausanias from giving information about a conspiracy? Did

this conspiracy involve Alexander as well as his mother, Olympias? The probable answer is yes. See Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1991) 108–10.

PERDICCAS was one of the three young friends of Alexander who killed Pausanias *(q.v.)*, Philip II's assassin. He became one of the king's Bodyguards in 330, at about the same time as Ptolemy. Alexander presented him with the symbolic ring of power shortly before he died. Perdiccas, then, was the first of the Successors to be in a position to make a bid for Alexander's entire empire. That attempt climaxed in his disastrous invasion of Egypt in 320. Perdiccas and Ptolemy had collaborated, to some extent, at Babylon, but fell out soon after. Ptolemy antagonized Perdiccas both by his capture of Alexander's body and by his execution of Cleomenes *(q.v.)*.

PEUCESTAS was Alexander's satrap of Persia. He "went native," wearing Persian clothes and even learning the Persian language. He joined Eumenes in the war against Antigonus the One-Eyed and lost his satrapy after defeat in the winter of 316/315. He apparently lived to become one of the supporters of Demetrius Poliorcetes in the years after Ipsus (Athen. 14.614–15).

PHILIP III ARRHIDAEUS was the mentally defective son of Philip II and his third wife, Philinna, and is not to be confused with Arrhidaeus *(q.v.)*, the officer in charge of Alexander's funeral. He married the ambitious Eurydice *(q.v.)*, Philip was joint king with Alexander IV from 323 until Alexander the Great's mother, Olympias, had him killed in 317.

PHILOTAS was the son of Parmenion, a leading general for both Philip II and Alexander. Philotas was one of Alexander's youthful companions. Along with Ptolemy, he was a Royal Page and one of Aristotle's pupils. In the early campaigns of Alexander, Philotas was the commander of the elite Companion Cavalry. He was implicated in a conspiracy in 330 and executed.

PITHON was one of Alexander's Bodyguards. He led the conspiracy to kill Perdiccas. He was apparently rewarded, with the approval of Ptolemy, by being appointed a guardian of the kings along with Arrhidaeus *(q.v.)*. He later became the satrap of Media. In 315 Antigonus the One-Eyed had him arrested, tried, and put to death.

PIXODARUS was the Persian satrap of Caria. He wished to form an alliance with Philip II and offered his daughter in marriage to Philip III Arrhidaeus. Alexander felt slighted and threatened by this proposal and sent Thessalus, an actor, to Halicarnassus to negotiate for a marriage to himself. Philip II was enraged at this duplicity. He told Alexander that he had no intention of letting him marry thedaughter of the "slave of a barbarian king." Philip also sent Ptolemy and three more of Alexander's closest friends into banishment. Ptolemy was not recalled until after Philip's assassination. Pixodarus was technically a subordinate to the Great King of Persia, but the satraps of Caria had, for some time, demonstrated considerable independence. Mausolus (whose famous tomb was the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world) was one such satrap of Caria. Pixodarus knew that the Macedonians were planning to invade Asia Minor. When he was unable to make an alliance with Philip, he made peace with the Great King. He married his daughter to a Persian nobleman, who then succeeded to the throne when

Pixodarus died. When Alexander conquered the region, he placed Queen Ada, Pixodarus' sister, in charge of Caria.

POLYCLITUS was one of Ptolemy's commanders. He defeated two of the generals of Antigonus the One-Eyed off the Cilician coast in 313. He was greatly praised and honored by Ptolemy, who was understandably pleased with his performance (Diod. 19.64.4–8).

POLYPERCHON was chosen by Antipater to be his successor in Macedonia. Antipater's son Cassander never accepted this decision. Polyperchon lost his long struggle (319–316) with Cassander for control. Polyperchon was little more than a pawn in the hands of his more ruthless contemporaries, and he was manipulated by both Cassander and Antigonus the One-Eyed.

PTOLEMY KERAUNUS ("THUNDERBOLT") was the son of Ptolemy and Eurydice. After being passed over for the throne of Egypt, he went to Thrace. He briefly married Lysimachus' widow, his own stepsister, Arsinoe II *(q.v.)*. He murdered Seleucus and took control of Macedonia in 280. His domination of Macedonia, however, did not last long. About one year later, in 279, the Gauls invaded the country, and Keraunus died in battle against them. His career is a sort of paradigm for how quickly power could be won and lost in the early Hellenistic era.

PTOLEMY II PHILADELPHUS was the son of Ptolemy and Berenice. He was born on the island of Cos in 309. He served as joint ruler for the last two years of his father's life (285–283), and then as sole king until 246. He continued his father's work in Alexandria, on the Museum, the library, and the lighthouse. He married Arsinoe I, the daughter of Lysimachus, and then Arsinoe II, his own full sister. He had his parents deified as the Savior Gods.

PYRRHUS had been king of Epirus as a child. Having been driven out in a palace revolt, he associated himself with Demetrius Poliorcetes and fought on the Antigonid side in the Battle of Ipsus in 301. After that battle he went to Egypt, essentially as a hostage for Demetrius. Ptolemy convinced him to change sides. Pyrrhus married Berenice's daughter Antigone and returned to Epirus, with Ptolemy's support, in 297. After Antigone's death, Pyrrhus married Lanassa, daughter of Agathocles, the tyrant of Syracuse, and received Corcyra as his dowry. Demetrius Poliorcetes took both Lanassa and Corcyra away from him. Demetrius also gained control of Macedonia by 294, which gave him a long and a disputed border with Pyrrhus. Pyrrhus, in conjunction with Lysimachus, drove Demetrius out of Macedonia in 288. Pyrrhus was like Demetrius in that both men were restless and constantly on the move. Neither was really interested in the arts of civilization, but both were obsessed with the art of war. Pyrrhus spent the years 280–275 fighting for the Greeks in Italy and Sicily. According to Plutarch (Pyrr. 21), it was after the Battle of Asculum in 279 that Pyrrhus said "one more victory over the Romans will destroy us completely," giving rise to the term "Pyrrhic victory." Pyrrhus returned to Epirus after hearing about the invasion of the Gauls. He fought Antigonus Gonatus, the son of Demetrius Poliorcetes, and then left Macedonia for the Peloponnesus. He was felled by a woman who threw a tile from a rooftop and then beheaded by a soldier in the street. Plutarch (*Pyrr.* 3) says that he did not have regular teeth, but that his upper jaw was a continuous bone with small indentations. Could it be that he had false teeth?

SABACES was the penultimate Persian satrap of Egypt, who left to aid Darius at the Battle of Issus. See MAZACES.

SELEUCUS, along with Ptolemy and Antigonus, was the founder of a stable dynasty. He became the satrap of Babylonia in 320. In 316, fearing Antigonus the One-Eyed, he fled to Egypt. He pressured Ptolemy into taking a more active role in the war against Antigonus. It was in the wake of Ptolemy's victory over Demetrius Poliorcetes at Gaza that Seleucus returned to his satrapy. Appian (*Syr.* 57) says that he was tall and muscular, and that he earned his surname Nicanor ("the Victorious") because of his great success as a general. He was one of the few (perhaps the only one) of Alexander's generals who did not abandon his Persian wife. He married Apama at Susa at the same time that Ptolemy married Artacama. Apama remained his wife and became the mother of his heir, Antiochus I Soter. Seleucus founded many cities, most notably Antioch on the Orontes, which became his capital. It was named after his father, who, like his son, was named Antiochus. Seleucus ceded his Indian provinces to Chandragupta *c.* 304. After the Battle of Ipsus in 301, he became the leading contender in the ongoing struggle for Alexander's empire, but he did not make a serious bid for it until the end of his life. He reintroduced Demetrius into Hellenistic politics, marrying Poliorcetes' daughter, Stratonice, in 298. Seleucus played off Demetrius against his potential rivals, especially Lysimachus. After Demetrius lost his position in Macedonia, being defeated in battle by Lysimachus and Pyrrhus, he became the virtual prisoner of Seleucus. In 281 Seleucus invaded Europe but was murdered by Ptolemy Keraunus, the son of Ptolemy Soter and Eurydice.

SPITAMENES and DATAPHERNES were two of Bessus' leading generals, who offered to hand Bessus over to Alexander. Ptolemy took charge of the mission.

STRATO OF LAMPSACUS was one of the tutors of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. He later succeeded Theophrastus as head of the Lyceum. He was famous for his theory of the void, and he wrote books on kingship, justice, dreams, human nature, and the breeding of animals, among others (Diog. Laer. 5.58–64).

THAIS was an Athenian *hetaira* or courtesan who became Ptolemy's mistress, apparently for an extended period of time. She encouraged Alexander to burn down Persepolis in 330. She bore Ptolemy three children: Lagus, named after his grandfather, Leontiscus, and a daughter named Eirene.

THIBRON. See HARPALUS.

# NOTES

## 1
## IN THE SHADOW OF ALEXANDER

1 All dates are BC.
2 Ptolemy's date of birth in 367/366 is derived by inference from Luc. *(Macrob.)* 12.
3 Curt. 9.8.22; Paus. 1.6.2.
4 Plut. *De Ira Cohib.* 9.
5 Suda, *s.v.* Lagos.
6 J.P.Mahaffy, *The Empire of the Ptolemies* (London 1895) 20.
7 Just. 13.4.
8 Arr. 4.13.1; Curt. 5.1.42 and 8.6.2–6.
9 Arr. 3.6.5; Plut. *Alex.* 10.3. The fact that these were Alexander's closest friends strongly suggests that they were among the Royal Pages.
10 So J.R.Ellis, *Philip II and Macedonian Imperialism* (London 1976) 161–2.
11 Plut. *Alex.* 10.3.
12 ibid.
13 Plut. *Alex.* 9.5.
14 Arr. 3.6.5–6.
15 Arr. 1.8.1.
16 E.g., Arr. 3.4.5.
17 Curt. 4.6.30.
18 Arr. 2.27.7.
19 Diod. 16.46.4–16.51.3.
20 Curt. 4.7.4.
21 See the excellent new translation by Richard Stoneman, *The Greek Alexander Romance* (Harmondsworth 1991) 68. The adventurous may also wish to consult *The Romance of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes* trans, from the Armenian by Albert Mugrdich Wolohojian (New York 1969) 55. The Greek text is available in W.Kroll's edition, *Historia Alexandri Magni* (Berlin 1926).
22 So Robin Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great* (London 1973) 202.
23 Ar. *Ath. Pol.* 61.7.
24 C.B.Welles, "The Discovery of Sarapis and the Foundation of Alexandria," *Historia* 11 (1962): 271–98, by using the information in *The Romance of Alexander* to refute the testimony of Arrian, tries to prove that Alexander went to Siwah before he

founded Alexandria. Welles believes that Alexander went to Siwah in order to ask the oracle where he should found the city. This information is lacking in all ancient accounts other than *The Romance of Alexander*. Welles also tries to prove that Alexander, not Ptolemy, established the Sarapis cult. Neither of these arguments is convincing. To reject Arrian's testimony for *The Romance of Alexander* is a dubious practice, and not credible in this instance. If Ptolemy anachronistically associated Alexander with the cult of Sarapis in his history (see, e.g., Arr. 7.26.2), it was surely to stimulate interest in his cult by linking it with the most popular and admired figure of the age. So P.H.L. Eggermont, *Alexander's Campaigns in Sind and Baluchistan and the Siege of the Brahmin Town of Harmatelia* (Leuven 1975) 112.

25 Arr. 3.1.5–3.4.5; Plut. *Alex.* 26; Just. 11.11; Diod. 17.49.2–17.52.7; Curt. 4.7.5–4.8.2.

26 Diod. 17.52.2.

27 Arr. 3.1.5.

28 Arr. 3.5.7.

29 Diod. 17.72; Curt. 5.7.3–11; Plut. *Alex.* 38.

30 Plut. *Alex.* 38. See Eugene N. Borza, "Fire from Heaven: Alexander at Persepolis," *CP* 67 (1972) 233–45. Borza agrees with Arrian (3.18.11–12) that the fire was a deliberate act of policy.

31 John Dryden, "Alexander's Feast," lines 147–50.

32 *SIG*[3] 314.

33 Athen. 13.576d; Just. 15.2.

34 So Robin Lane Fox (*supra* n. 22) 260–4.

35 Arr. 3.18.11–12.

36 Is it possible that Ptolemy and Alexander became estranged or that Ptolemy fell into disgrace for some reason? Arrian, in a passage that has seldom been cited in this context, suggests that Alexander chose Ptolemy as *somatophylax* in 336, shortly after Philip's death (Arr. 3.6.6). The context is admittedly vague. It is conceivable that Arrian only meant that Ptolemy was recalled in 336 and eventually became a *somatophylax*. So A.B.Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander,* I: *Commentary on Books I–III* (Oxford 1980) 283. But the passage seems to suggest that Ptolemy was recalled and made a Bodyguard soon after. If this is the case, and Alexander made him a Bodyguard again in 330 (Arr. 3.27.5), then he must have been demoted. If this scenario is right, it might explain why so little is heard of Ptolemy during the early days of the Asian campaign. Ptolemy then must have worked his way slowly back into Alexander's favor until he was reappointed Bodyguard in 330.

37 Mahaffy (*supra* n. 6) 22.

38 Curt. 9.8.23.

39 Curt. 8.1.45, 48; Arr. 4.8.8–9.

40 Arr. 3.29.6–3.30.5.

41 Diod. 17.83.7–9; Curt. 7.5.19–42; Plut. *Alex.* 43.3.

42 Plut. *Alex.* 57.4–5.

43 Arr. 4.15.7–8.

44 Arr. 4.28.1–2.

45 Curt. 9.8.17–28; Diod. 17.103. There are similar stories in Strabo (15.2.7) and Cicero (*De Divinitate* 2.135).

46 H.Bretzl, *Botanische Forschungen des Alexanderzuges* (Leipzig 1903) 260–6.

47 W.W.Tarn, *Alexander the Great* II (Cambridge 1948) 70–1; "The Hellenistic Ruler-Cult and the Daemon," *JHS* 48 (1928): 206–19, esp. 218.
48 Eggermont (*supra* n. 24).
49 Strabo's version of the story (15.2.7) seems to locate the town in Gedrosia rather than India.
50 Eggermont (*supra* n. 24) 114–25.
51 Arr. 6.22.1–6.26.5.
52 Arr. 6.28.3–4.
53 Arr. 7.3; Plut. *Alex.* 69.3–4.
54 Arr. 7.4.4–8; Plut. *Alex.* 70.2; Athen. 12.538b–539a (based on the account of Chares).
55 Arrian says eighty; Athenaeus, quoting Chares, the royal chamberlain, gives the number as ninety-two.
56 Just. 11.10.2; Plut. *Alex.* 21 A.W.W.Tarn, *Alexander the Great* II (Cambridge 1948) 330–7, and "Heracles Son of Barsine," JHS 41 (1921) 18–28,has argued not so much against the existence of Barsine, as against the idea that she was his mistress and bore his child.
57 Or is it even possible that Ptolemy and Thais were married? For this suggestion, see Eugene N. Borza, "Cleitarchus and Diodorus' Account of Alexander," *PACA* 11 (1968): 35 n. 47.
58 *SIG*[3] 314.
59 So J.R.Hamilton, *Plutarch's Alexander: A Commentary* (Oxford 1969) 100. See also *CAH* 6.494–5 for a description of Ptolemy's trip to Greece.
60 Just. 15.2.
61 Athen. 13.576e.
62 Athen. (citing Chares) 4.171b–c.
63 Plut. *Alex.* 72.3.
64 Arr. *Indica* 40.6–8.
65 Arr. 7.23.6; Plut. *Alex.* 72.2. Diodorus (17.115.6) reports the answer as being that Hephaestion should be worshiped as a god.
66 Arr. 7.23.6–8.

## 2
## PTOLEMY THE HISTORIAN

1 W.W.Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Cambridge 1948) 2 vols.
2 Review of L.Pearson in *Gnomon* 33 (1961): 660–7.
3 Tarn, *op. cit.,* II, 63–87.
4 Tarn, *op. cit.,* II, 124. For some possible uses of Justin, see N.G.L.Hammond, *Three Histories of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge 1983) 86–115.
5 See, e.g., "The Eunuch Bagoas," *CQ* 52 (1958) 144–57.
6 Arr. 1.8.1–2.
7 Diod. 17.12.3.
8 Review of L.Pearson in *Gnomon* 33 (1961): 660–7.
9 "Alexander the Great," *CW* 65 (1971) 40.
10 "Bias in Ptolemy's History of Alexander," *CQ* 63 (1969) 241.
11 "Ptolemy's History of Alexander," *CQ,* n.s. 34 (1984) 373–85.
12 ibid.

13 Errington, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 10) 241.

## 3
## THE SUCCESSORS

1 Arr. 7.12.3–4.
2 Curt. 10.10.15.
3 See W.Heckel in *Quintus Curtius Rufus: The History of Alexander* (Harmondsworth 1984) 298 n. 30.
4 Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon: A Historical Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1991) 108–10.
5 See *supra,* Chapter 2, pp. 20–1.
6 The best modern discussion of these events is still R.M. Errington, "From Babylon to Triparadeisos," *JHS* 90 (1970):49–77.
7 For the meeting in Babylon, I have followed Curtius (10.6–7).
8 The existence of Barsine and her relationship to Alexander and Nearchus is controversial. For the main arguments, see W.W.Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Cambridge 1948) II, 330–8; H.Breve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage* (Munich 1926) II, nos. 206 and 353, pp. 102–4, 168; Errington, *op, cit.* 50.
9 Errington (ibid.) calls it "non-traditional."
10 Curt. 10.6.16.
11 Arr. *Met' Alex.* 1.2–8.
12 See Richard Billows' discussion of the factions in *Antigonus the One-Eyed* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990) 52–4.
13 The account of Diodorus (18.3.1–5) agrees essentially with that of Arrian (*Met' Alex.* 1.2–8) and Curtius (10.10.1–6). Justin (13.4.1–6) makes a number of mistakes, such as confusing the Arrhidaeus in charge of Alexander's funeral with King Philip Arrhidaeus.

## 4
## PTOLEMY AS SATRAP

1 Hdt. 2.35.
2 Hdt. 2.42.
3 Plut. *Is. et Os.*
4 Paus. 1.6.3; Curt. 10.10.20.
5 Diod. 18.34.6.
6 Strabo 17.1.32. See Dorothy J.Thompson's study, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton, NJ 1988).
7 [Ar.] *Oec.* 1352a–1353b.
8 Tac. *Hist.* 4.83–4; Plut. *Is. et Os.* 361F–362B. In Latin sources, the name of the god is usually spelled with an *e.* The name of his temple may be either Sarapeum or Serapeum.
9 Tac. *Hist.* 4.84.
10 Plut. *Is. et Os.* 362A.

11 See P.M.Fraser in *Opuscula Atheniensia* (Lund 1951–65) 2.36; and J.G.Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Cambridge 1970) 516.
12 Tac. *Hist.* 4.83.
13 Apul. *Met.* 11.5–6.
14 Arr. *Met' Alex.* 24.6.
15 Athen. 13.576e.
16 Diod. 18.19–21.
17 *SEG* 9.1.1–46.
18 Diod. 20.40.1.
19 Diod. 18.3.5; Curt. 10.5.4.
20 Richard A.Billows, *Antigonus the One-Eyed* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990) 61 n. 19, notes that Diodorus here (18.3.5 and 18.28.2–6) "shows strong traces of Ptolemaic propaganda." E.Badian, "A King's Notebooks," *HSCP 72* (1967):183–204, argues not so much that Alexander wanted to be buried at Siwah, as that Diodorus' source, Hieronymus of Cardia, recorded it as a fact.
21 Diod. 18.4.
22 Paus. 1.6.1–3.
23 Diod. 18.28.3.
24 Arr. *Met' Alex.* 1.25.
25 Suet. *Aug.* 18.1.

## 5
## THE WAR WITH PERDICCAS

1 See, e.g., Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990) 13.
2 The narrative of this campaign comes mainly from Diod. 18.29–36.
3 R.M.Errington, "From Babylon to Triparadeisos," *JHS* 90 (1970):65.
4 Diod. 18.33.3; Arr. *Met' Alex.* 1.28.
5 Errington, *op. cit.,* 65–6.
6 Arr. *Met' Alex.* 1.30.
7 Arr. *Met' Alex.* 1.32–3.
8 Arr. *Met' Alex.* 1.34.

## 6
## THE WAR WITH ANTIGONUS

1 Paus. 1.6.8.
2 So J.P.Mahaffy, *The Empire of the Ptolemies* (London 1895) 34.
3 Grace Harriet Macurdy, *Hellenistic Queens* (Baltimore 1932, repr. 1985) 103.
4 ibid.
5 Plut. *Demetr.* 32 and 46.
6 App. *Syr.* 52.
7 Diod. 18.43; App. *Syr.* 52.
8 Plutarch (*Pyrr.* 4) says that Berenice was the most favored of Ptolemy's several wives.
9 Paus. 1.7.1.

10 See Macurdy (*supra* n. 3,104–5) for a discussion of the scholium on Theocritus which is sometimes amended to read "Lagus," in an attempt to make Berenice the sister of Ptolemy. Berenice's parents were named Antigone and Magus, as were her children by Philip. She was not her second husband's half-sister.
11 Plut. *Pyrr.* 4.
12 Paus. 1.7.2; Polyaen. 2.28.
13 Plin. 6.16; Step. Byz. *s.v.* "Berenikai."
14 Diod. 19.57.
15 Diod. 19.62.1.
16 So Richard A.Billows, *Antigonus the One-Eyed* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990). He describes Antigonus' proclamation as "a piece of propaganda, aimed especially at undermining Kassandros' position in Macedonia and Greece" (p. 114).
17 Diod. 19.80.3.
18 Diod. 19.69.1.
19 Diod. 19.81.1.
20 Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* 12.1.
21 E.g., Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990) 312– 35.
22 Diod. 19.105.1.
23 Diod. 20.37.3–6. See J. Seibert, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Ptolemaios I* (Munich 1969) 184–9.
24 Diod. 20.37.1.
25 Seibert, *op. cit.,* 180–2, 187–8; Billows, *op. cit.* 144–5.
26 See the excellent discussion in Erich Gruen, "The Coronation of the Diadochoi" in *The Craft of the Ancient Historian: Essays in Honor of Chester G. Starr,* ed. J.Eadie and J.Ober (Lantham, Md, 1985) 253–71.
27 Diod. 20.37.2.
28. *SIG*[3] 314. See also *CAH* 6.494–5 for more on Ptolemy's trip to Greece.
29 Plut. *Demetr.* 8.
30 Athen. 12.542b-e.
31 So Green, *op. cit.* 85.
32 Suda *s.v.* Zenodotus.
33 Diog. Laer. 5.78–9.
34 Diod. 20.46.6.
35 Plut. *Demetr.* 18.
36 Gruen, *op. cit.,* 259.
37 Diod. 20.81.4.
38 Diod. 20.82.3.
39 Diod. 20.96.1.
40 Diod. 20.99.3; Plut. *Demetr.* 22.
41 Paus. 1.8.6.
42 See, e.g. Mahaffy, *op. cit.,* 62 n. 3.
43 The Parian Marble (*FGrH* 239B.23) brackets Ptolemy's assumption of the kingship and the siege of Rhodes as happening at the same time, i.e. 305/4. See also A.E.Samuel, *Ptolemaic Chronology* (Munich 1962) 4–11.
44 *OGIS* 6.
45 Plut. *Demetr.* 10. For the idea that divine honors were not entirely cynical— may, in fact, have been sincere—see F.W.Walbank, "Könige als Cötter: Überlegungen zum Herrscherkult von Alexander bis Augustus," *Chiron* 17 (1987) 365–82; and

Alan E.Samuel, *The Shifting Sands of History: Interpretations of Ptolemaic Egypt* (Lanham, New York and London 1989) 19.

46 Euhemerus of Messene was a friend and contemporary of Cassander. His theory about kings and gods is paraphrased by Diodorus (6.1.2–10).

47 Dio Cass. 51.20.6–8; Suet. *Aug.* 52.

48 Diod. 20.106.2.

49 Diod. 21.5.

# 7
# PTOLEMY THE KING

1 App. *Syr.* 53.

2 ibid.

3 Paus. 1.9.6.

4 Paus. 1.10.3.

5 Plut. *Demetr.* 31.

6 *CAH,* 71.82.

7 Strabo 17.1.6.

8 Strabo 17.1.8.

9 P.M.Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972) 1.7–37; E.M. Forster, *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* (1922; repr. New York 1986) 10–12; L. Sprague de Camp, *Great Cities of the Ancient World* (New York 1990) 285–6.

10 Arr. 3.1.5; Diod. 17.52.3; Tac. *Hist.* 4.83.

11 Strabo 17.1.8. Strabo also mentions the inner palaces. P.M.Fraser thinks that the inner palaces were the real palaces which gave their name to the Palace District or Brucheion (*op. cit.* 1.14–15).

12 Strabo 17.1.8.

13 ibid.

14 Fraser (*op. cit.,* 2.11–12 n. 28) thinks that Ptolemy had moved by 319. Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990) 687, places this event in 313.

15 Diog. Laer. 5.37.

16 Ael. *VH* 3.17.

17 Strabo 9.1.20; Diog. Laer. 5.78.

18 The "Letter of Aristeas" is available in an English translation in M.M.Austin's excellent collection of sources, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest* (Cambridge 1981) no. 262 (pp. 440–2).

19 Galen 17 (1). 607.

20 Galen, *Commentarium in Hippocratis Epidemiai* 3.239–40. See E.Wenkebach, ed. *Corpus Medicorum Graec.* (Leipzig 1936) 79–80, or Jeno Platty, ed. *Sources on the Earliest Greek Libraries* (Amsterdam 1968) 118–19. See also Fraser, *op. cit.* 2.480–1.

21 Tzetzes, *De Comoedia;* P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972) 1.320–35; Michael Grant, *From Alexander to Cleopatra* (New York 1982) 258–60.

22 Diog. Laer. 5.76.

23 "Letter of Aristeas." See *supra* n. 17.

24 See Edward Alexander Parsons, *The Alexandrian Library* (Amsterdam 1952) 305, 358–70.
25 Luciano Canfora, *The Vanished Library: A Wonder of the Ancient World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990).
26 Amm. Marc. 22.16.15.
27 Epiph. *De Ponderibus et Mensuris* 3–11. See the excellent review of *The Vanished Library* by Hugh Lloyd-Jones in the *New York Review of Books* (June 14, 1990, pp. 27–9). Lloyd-Jones tells us more of the library's history in three pages than Canfora in almost two hundred.
28 Hom. *Od.* 4.384–480.
29 Plut. *Alex.* 26.
30 Suda *s.v.* Pharos.
31 So Michael Grant, *From Alexander to Cleopatra* (New York 1982) 124–5.
32 Strabo 17.1.6.
33 Lucian *Historia* 62.
34 Fraser, *op. cit.* 1.18–21.
35 ibid.
36 Step. Byz. *s.v.* Pharos. See H.Thiersch, *Pharos: Antike Islam und Occident. Ein Beitrag zur Architecturgeschichte,* also known as *Der Pharos von Alexandria* (Leipzig and Berlin 1909); M.L. Otero, 'The Pharos of Alexandria," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 30 (1933):277–92.
37 Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* 4.10.5) says three hundred stadia or about thirty-seven miles.
38 E.M.Forster, *Alexandria* (Alexandria 1922; repr. New York 1961) 146.
39 Suda *s.v.* Lagos.
40 Plut. *Demetr.* 35.
41 Plut. *Demetr.* 39–44.
42 Plut. *Demetr.* 44; *SIG*$^3$ 390·
43 The Parian Marble (*FGrH* 239 B no.19) places Ptolemy II's birth at 309/8.
44 Diog. Laer. 5.58.
45 Fraser, *op. cit.* 1.322–3.
46 Theocr. 17.121–5; *SIG*$^3$ 390.27–56.
47 *SIG*$^3$ 390.
48 *SIG*$^3$ 390.28–9.

## EPILOG

1 *CAH, 7*$^2$*.1,* 125–8
2 ibid. 127.
3 ibid. 170.
4 Lawrence Durrell, *Justine* (New York 1957).
5 Roger S.Bagnall, *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions outside Egypt* (Leiden 1976) 3.
6 H.Bengtson, *Die Strategic in der hellenistischen Zeit* (Munich 1937–52) vol. 3.
7 Bagnall, *op. cit.* 38–42.
8 E.M.Forster, *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* (1922; repr. New York 1968).
9 Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York 1980) 277.
10 ibid. 276–7.

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# INDEX